

ADULT EDUCATION

THE RECORD OF THE
BRITISH ARMY

by

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PREFACE

ONE of the remarkable developments during the Second World War has been the growth of education in His Majesty's Forces. The reasons for this growth would be difficult to assess accurately but among them must be put the increased tensions of war-time conditions which, often for the first time, have brought men and women face to face with reality and the deeper meaning of life. In place of the frivolities of mass entertainment with which sentiments have been artificially titillated during leisure hours, many men began to feel the need for expressing those desires of the mind and emotions and spirit which the challenge of war had produced. The majority, however, have been unable to formulate their wants, and here education in the Services has played its most useful part.

By experiment and improvisation, by using methods which have raised many a scornful eyebrow, Service education officers and instructors have striven to provide educational opportunities which would enable those with inarticulate yearnings to take part in activities which contribute to their harmonious individual and social development. By seeking to provide those opportunities at the level of ordinary men and women rather than at the heights to which some enthusiasts think they ought to be, a fresh impetus has been given to the general education of adults. It is hoped that this unofficial account of some of those experiments and experiences will, in small measure at least, be of use to those who believe in the continued education of adults both as a means of promoting the happiness of the individual and as the inseparable companion of democracy.

Since the authors of this book have had little practical

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experience of education in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, their account is confined to the educational achievements of the Army ; no doubt similar accounts of education in the sister Services will be forthcoming. Moreover, to have suggested that education in the Army is a development of the Second World War would be foolish and untrue. The education of the soldier has been proceeding a long time, so, in order that the story of education in the Second World War may be seen in its proper setting, a short description of Army education up to 1939 has been given. Much of this early history has been taken from a thesis presented by one of the authors (T. H. H) for a higher degree at the University of Leeds ; grateful thanks are expressed to Prof. Frank Smith for permission to reproduce from that work.

The authors' thanks are also due to Colonels A. C. T. White, V.C, M.C, and A. E. Watts, both of the Army Educational Corps, for the use of material which they had published in the *Journal of Army Education* and elsewhere. Finally we wish to record our indebtedness to Dr. Kathleen M. Hawkins for reading proofs and other help and encouragement.

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Note —Since this book was written, it has been announced (December 10, 1946) that in recognition of its past services, the Army Educational Corps shall in future enjoy the distinction of the title Royal Army Educational Corps. The facing of the Corps has also been changed—from Cambridge blue to royal blue.

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PART ONE

ORIGINS OF ARMY EDUCATION

Chapter One

Early Regimental Schools

UP to the beginning of the nineteenth century, education found little place in the military training of a soldier. In Wellington's army the chief requisites of the fighting man were that he should know how to use his weapons, should be amenable to military discipline, and, above all, should have a body strong enough to enable him to withstand the privations and fatigues of warfare. No provision was made for his mental needs because its relationship with military training had never been appreciated.

It was no wonder, therefore, that the vast majority of soldiers were completely illiterate. But, as in the civil world, educational murmurings inside the Army were beginning to make themselves heard, and in a book published in Dublin in 1767¹ we get what is probably the first record of educational activity inside an Army unit. The book contains a set of model standing orders for the regiment, part of which is the following :

A Serjeant, or Corporal, whose Sobriety, Honesty and Good Conduct can be depended upon and that is capable of teaching Writing, Reading and Arithmetic, is to be employed to act in the capacity of a Schoolmaster, where Soldiers and Soldiers' Children are to be instructed. A room to be appointed for that use, and it would be highly commendable if the Chaplain, or his Deputy, would pay some attention to the conduct of the school.

An earlier attempt to counter the difficult problem of illiteracy was bound up with the founding of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich in 1741 ; but this foundation, like that of the Royal Military College at Sandhurst in

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1798, was designed chiefly for the education of officer cadets. In 1797 a school for soldiers' children was established and became sufficiently successful for the Board of Ordnance to undertake its management and support.*

The most significant of these early attempts in the education of the soldier, however, occurred in 1800 when drafts of selected officers and men assembled in camp at Swinley, near Camberley. Here, under the command of Sir John Moore, private soldiers were first conceived of as intelligent beings, "capable of doing their duty efficiently because they knew what they were doing".² Bound up with other reforms, individual training was introduced instead of the formal mass drill movements which had been given the death-blow during the War of American Independence (1763-83). These selected men were known as the "Experimental Corps of Riflemen" and later became the 1st Battalion of the Rifle Brigade. In the standing orders, published in 1801, the connection between individual military training and education was clearly recognised.³ The standing orders laid down that a school should be established "for the instruction of those who wish to fit themselves for the situation of N.C.O.'s". Every serjeant was expected to be master of reading, writing and the first four rules of arithmetic. "The knowledge of these", ran the orders, "will also be much in favour of promoting the private Rifleman." The school was open from 'rouse' to breakfast, from eleven to dinner-time, and after dinner until the evening parade; "at odd times when the troops were away from camp, the schoolmaster taught their children".

Regulations were laid down for "the periodical examination of the scholars, the institution of a library, the provision

* The Royal Hibernian Military School had been incorporated under a Royal Charter in Dublin in 1769 and was intended for "the orphans and destitute of Irish Regiments ordered abroad". As a result of the establishment of Eire, the school was transferred to share the accommodation of the Duke of York's Royal Military School at Dover in September 1922. The school ceased to exist in the autumn of 1924.

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for lectures on military subjects, tactics and outpost duties and the encouragement of athletic exercises".⁴ The moving spirit in these new departures was the second-in-command, Lieut.-Colonel William Stewart, who later commanded a division under Wellington. It is significant that the striking improvement in the behaviour and reasoning power of the rifleman, after the introduction of Stewart's reforms, was accompanied by a corresponding increase in military efficiency which won for the Rifle Brigade in the next decade as great a share of fame as any unit in the Army.

In the stern work of the Peninsular War, the troops had little time to think of the improvement of their personal prospects, and the Riflemen's school for adults was abandoned. The children's school, however, became an institution in this and many other regiments, being carried on, without the aid of the Government, "by the zeal, intelligence and liberality of the officers, and by private contributors".⁵

Stewart's reforms had been noted by others. On March 25, 1807, Lieut.-Colonel Barclay, officer commanding 1st Battalion, the 52nd Foot, established a

regimental school (in Sicily) for the instruction of the non-commissioned officers and privates. Thomas Kain and John Whitehead were appointed joint teachers under the superintendence of the serjeant-major, and the following weekly rates were charged to those who attended the school, for the purpose of purchasing books, paper, pens and ink, and for rewarding the teachers according to their assiduity and merit :

Serjeants	10d. per week
Corporals & Drummers	8d. " "
Privates	6d. " "

The fees were later reduced to 1s 8d. a month for serjeants, 1s. for corporals and 10d. for privates, but these sums did not include paper. In Sicily, where the regiment had been sent as a precautionary measure against Napoleon's

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threatened invasion of the dominions of the King of Naples, "it is creditable to record that there was not a soldier of the 52nd guilty of any of those atrocious crimes which were then so frequent in that army".⁶

There is full evidence of the next development in army education. The commander-in-chief, Frederick, Duke of York, who had already given proof of his interest in military education (as Sandhurst and the Duke of York's School at Chelsea⁷ bear witness), recommended to the War Office in 1811 that it should institute the rank of "Serjeant Schoolmaster" who would instruct "the boys receiving pay, and also the soldiers' children gratis".⁸

It was a bad time to ask for approval, since all that year, side-by-side with the Peninsular War, one of Britain's minor campaigns was raging between the War Office (headquarters of the Secretary-at-War, who was paramount in the financial field) and the Horse Guards (headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief, who was still the head of the Army at home, the representative of the King and in charge of recruiting and command of the home forces).² But the proposal emerged alive from the files. On November 14, 1811, the following letter was issued by the Adjutant-General, Sir Harry Calvert, to the "Colonels or Commanding Officers of Regulars and Militia":

I have received the Commander-in-Chief's Directions to inform you that it is in the contemplation of Government to afford the means of establishing Regimental Schools, for the care and instruction of the children of Non-commissioned officers and soldiers. It is His Royal Highness's intention that these schools shall be conducted on the Plan recommended by the Rev. Dr. Bell and adopted with great success at the Royal Military Asylum, and you will be pleased immediately to look out for a person calculated to superintend the School of the Regiment under your Command

(The essence of the monitorial system consisted in setting children to teach children. When he was superintendent of

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the Male Orphan Asylum at Madras, Dr. Andrew Bell had been concerned about the indifferent teaching of his staff of poorly educated and untrained masters. In attempting to remedy this situation, Bell decided that better results would be obtained from a number of carefully trained monitors, who would learn themselves by teaching a small number of other boys. The idea was developed with such success that gradually the masters were relieved of all teaching duties and were limited to supervisory duties. An account of Bell's experiment was published on his return to Britain in 1797. The idea of using monitors was also introduced by Joseph Lancaster at about this time ; in working out his ideas he derived assistance from the published account of Bell's experiment at Madras.)

This letter was addressed to all regular and militia units, and various replies indicated that the Duke of York's recommendation was already in practice in regiments other than those already mentioned. Major Thoyts, for example, who was temporarily in command of the North York Militia, stated triumphantly " that one William Hutchinson had for *several years* acted as schoolmaster to the Regiment and given the greatest satisfaction in that capacity ".⁹

By a general order, dated January 1, 1812, all generals and commanding officers were called upon to take the schools under their special protection. This order stated that " the Female children of the Soldiery were intended to partake of the benefits of this system, whenever the circumstances would permit ". It was further ordained that regimental chaplains were to look upon it as part of their duty to inspect and supervise schools ; they were also " diligently to supervise the conduct of the serjeant-schoolmasters " The order concluded rather grandiloquently that the objects of the schools would be achieved by giving " to the soldiers the comfort of being assured that the Education and Welfare of their children are objects of their Sovereign's paternal Solcitude " and that they might thus " raise from their off-spring

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a succession of Loyal Subjects, brave Soldiers and good Christians ”.

The system of army schools was in full swing before the end of the year — or rather, at such times as the chaplains were exercising their supervision. The rate of pay of the serjeant-schoolmaster was fixed as that of a staff-serjeant by a War Office circular letter of July 24, 1812. On the same day a warrant was issued to the barrack commissioners empowering them to appropriate schoolrooms, and to issue the requisite coals and candles.

During the next few years the various War Office letters were acted upon in the different regiments, and resulted in the establishment of schools as distinct in tone and quality as the local conditions under which they arose. The state of the Royal Regiment of Artillery in 1816, for example, could scarcely be considered desirable for the development of efficient schooling. Lieut-Colonel H. W. L. Hime tells us, how, in that year, “ the Companies from abroad poured into Woolwich. . . . It is useless here ”, he said, “ to mention the habits and manners of an idle garrison where wine and spirits are cheap and abundant. The state of such Companies as arrived from the West Indies, Mediterranean, etc. can easily be imagined. Drunkenness, age and the deleterious and debilitating effects of climate had done their worst and rendered it necessary to discharge almost the whole of the men who returned.”¹⁰ Against this, in India there is the story of Lieutenant George Peevor, an ensign of the 17th (Leicestershire) Regiment, who, during the tour of the regiment in Ghazee-pore, voluntarily took over (from the invalided chaplain) “ the instruction of the children and the young soldiers attending the school ”.¹¹ He devoted all his spare time to the school, “ with the result that in each successive inspection report (from 1816 to 1823, when the Regiment returned home), this officer was specially brought to notice for his indefatigable exertions in the benevolent cause he had undertaken ”.¹¹

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In the Peninsula, the official birth of the regimental schools (January 1, 1812) coincided with Wellington's advance from Portugal into Spain. For a generation or so, the original object of providing schools for the instruction of serving soldiers fell into general neglect, while there are also records of the difficulties of providing schools for soldiers' children under active service conditions. In 1813 Major-General de Bernewitz, when inspecting the 51st Regiment (1st Battalion King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry), at Nomento in Portugal, reported that "no school could be established for the regimental children . . . in consequence of the unsettled state of the Regiment in this country".¹²

Usually, however, schools were provided for the children, and of the nine (out of every hundred) soldiers, who were permitted to marry on the strength, the six whose families were selected to accompany the regiments on active service were looked at enviously by their comrades. (At home and abroad, soldiers' wives were the official 'sempstresses' and laundresses, the wives of serjeants waiting on the officers, and the wives of the rank and file working within their companies. The children themselves were usually looked upon as wards of the regiment.) The schools were often organised by companies and were drilled daily by the schoolmaster-serjeant and his 'usher', a corporal of the regiment. Such a regime was intended to give the boys a predilection for regimental life, and usually, if the schoolmaster were free from excess of zeal, it succeeded.

One of the first schools to be established on active service was at Belem, near Lisbon, where the "base details", headquarters of commissariat, and some coast artillery were stationed. Although the Duke of Wellington was prompt in ordering the regiments in the field to establish schools "as opportunities might permit", shortly afterwards he curtailed their activities by depriving each unit of half its annual school grant to maintain the "unprovided" schools at Belem.¹³

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In the next year there was another development in army administration which affected the schoolmaster ; the enlisted boy made his appearance. Every battalion of foot guards and infantry of the line was authorised to recruit up to fifty boys, and was enjoined to keep them constantly at school, to fit them for promotion to non-commissioned officer rank.¹⁴

Turning to the internal organisation of the schools, it was usual for the daily routine to be broken into periods of fifteen minutes for the younger children, or thirty minutes for the remainder. The master gathered his class around him and dictated a task sufficient to fill the period. At the end the class was called up for catechism.¹⁵ In most cases the work was merely memorised and was wholly uncritical. Even so late as 1858 the inspector-general of army schools wrote that " the utmost care is requisite, and is not always taken to prevent children learning by rote without the exercise of their own faculties ". That his injunction was apposite may be seen from the following example of the Lord's Prayer, written by a girl eleven years of age at an army school at Canterbury in November 1858 :

Our Father Beechart in heven, alwed be they name they kindom they will be dun in earth our tis inheven and forgives this day our daly bred and forgives they thesments again us, and lead us not in temtachen but lievers from evil for thine kindom the powyer the glory for ever and dever. Amen.¹⁶

According to the standards of the school, the girl could read and write quite well.

Nor do we find the schoolmaster escaping from the avalanche of ' forms ' which is a *sine qua non* in army life. It was his duty to enter " in a book with 31 parallel columns, to last a month ", every task of every pupil " with page or line ended at ", for the initials of the chaplain or commanding officer at their weekly visits.

The curriculum was modest and unadorned, consisting only of the ' 3 R's '. These were always illustrated by, and

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frequently reinforced with, moral and religious instruction. The young children began their learning with a sand-table in which they were taught to trace the printed and cursive alphabets. Later they were promoted to possession of a slate and of Mrs. Trimmer's *Charity School Spelling-Book*, Part I. Through this manual the boy plodded, one syllable at a time, until, as the official "Instructions" explain, "he has pro-ceed-ed through Mis-tress Trim-mer's spell-ing-book nev-er al-low-ed to pro-nounce two syl-la-bles to-geth-er". A second time he waded through it, still un-comprehendingly, this time "on no account reading two words together, but pausing at the end of each word, as if there was a comma". At the third attempt he was allowed to make his work intelligible by reading in phrases. Then, fortified by scholarship, he was allowed to plunge into the full delights of the five books that composed the library :

Our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount.
The Psalter with Morning and Evening Services.
Osterwald's Abridgment of the Bible.
The Chief Truths of Religion.
The Testament and Bible.

It is hazardous to speculate about the results of the curriculum on the recipients. But the official instructions were quite definite about the effects. There it was, planned "as being the surest means of promoting their success in the various pursuits in this world, and of ensuring their ETERNAL HAPPINESS". The Duke of York's School, using the same syllabus and method, describes its aim a little more precisely if not dissimilarly as being "to qualify them either for the Duties of a Soldier, or for other subordinate positions in life".¹⁷

Under these conditions the regimental schools grew and became established features in camps where troops of the British Army were stationed. An order of the 52nd Regiment (Oxfordshire Light Infantry), dated August 25, 1821,

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shows that the post of schoolmaster-serjeant was now a recognised appointment on the strength of every regiment.¹⁸

Much useful work was also being carried on by a few individuals in their private capacity. We have the record of a John Shipp who enlisted in the 22nd Foot and went to India. "I was the fife and bugler in the light company, the kind captain of which, seeing my anxious spirit, generously undertook to improve me in reading and writing, of which I at that time knew but little. In the course of one year's close application, I so much improved as to keep the books of the company and his own private accounts"¹⁹

That the schoolmaster-serjeant was not kept idle is seen from the records of the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.²⁰ While stationed in Malta, in 1830, the commanding officer, Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, who was a son of William IV, "showed his interest in the regiment and welfare of the men by establishing branch schools, where they might spend their otherwise idle moments in acquiring sound and useful instruction and, being employed, escape the temptations which everywhere beset the indolent".

The seeds of education were now widely scattered. Many remained dormant, but others began to germinate and led to the development of various educational activities besides the regimental schools. Among the more important of these were garrison libraries. In the early nineteenth century any attempt to introduce books or other printed matter into barracks was treated with summary refusal because of the fear of the pamphleteering activities of Jacobins, Radicals and Chartists, the emotionally explosive Biblical commentaries of new sects and the atheistic writings of people like Tom Paine. Steadily, however, the opinion gained ground that to treat a social weakness by ignoring it was a short-sighted policy, and the Royal Commission on Military Punishments in 1836 proposed the establishment of 'libraries' of varying sizes in military stations. Before this, the only books allowed in barracks had been twenty-eight

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volumes authorised by the Bench of Bishops in 1825 and purchased by the War Office for the use of *sick* soldiers. The list included such comforting works as *Kind Caution to Profane Swearers*, *Peer's Companion for the Aged*, and *Discourse on a Death-bed Repentance*. From 1838 the development of unit libraries proceeded rapidly, although many years elapsed before newspapers were allowed into reading-rooms.

In the meantime the schools had not been progressing satisfactorily. There appears to have been a marked decline in interest and activity, the root cause of which seems to have been the absence of efficient inspection. That, in its turn, began with the absence of any executive powers in the inspectorial branch. The regular army chaplains were able to inspect with some regularity and probably with some uniformity of aim, but they were powerless to assist in the carrying out of their recommendations. The civilian clergymen who officiated in more than half the stations of the Army were even less powerful, and it is doubtful if they had any rights in army schools at all.

For the decline in the standard of army schools, some criticism must be directed at the Duke of Wellington. When giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Military Punishments in 1836 his attitude to his men was revealed by the remarks: "I have no idea of any great effect being produced by anything but the fear of immediate corporal punishment. Having had this subject in contemplation for six or seven years, I have turned it over in my mind in every possible way, and I declare that I have not an idea of what can be substituted for it."²¹

A correspondent in the *Quarterly Review* of 1845 wrote that "with respect to the system in force its value may be judged when we state that . . . no provisions are made either for training regimental school-masters for their office, or subjecting them, after they enter upon it, to an efficient and regular course of inspection"

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The schools were not achieving all that had been expected of them. Fortunately, bad times often bring the man. The Rev. G. R. Gleig was appointed chaplain-general in 1846. Army schools, which had surpassed the average of the nation in the liberality of their original scheme, were for a while to rise above the average in efficiency, at least. To Gleig must go most of the credit. Thus, despite the fact that, in his earlier years, Gleig had referred to soldiers as "mere machines, as every person knows; they cannot think for themselves, or act for themselves in any point of duty".²²

In 1844 Gleig had been appointed principal chaplain and in 1846 became chaplain-general. He continued in this office until 1875 and during 1846-57 also acted as inspector-general of army schools. During this period he worked indefatigably to improve the range and quality of education in army schools and was fortunate in finding such influential supporters as the Right Hon. Sydney Herbert (secretary-at-war, 1845-6), and the Right Hon. Alex. Baring, Lord Ashburton (paymaster-general, 1845-6).

In the summer of 1845, Baring and Gleig paid a visit to the Duke of York's school and their observations are best left to Gleig's own words:

It was school-hour, yet to and fro numbers of boys were passing along the walks and about the corridors some laden with baskets of coal, some carrying filthier utensils, some bearing provisions, some sweeping out the colonnade in front of the building. A large wheel was then used for the purpose of raising water, by the process of the forcing-pump, from certain underground tanks to the top of the house. Three or four unfortunate boys were at work on this wheel, straining beyond their strength and in constant risk, should they lose their hold, of having their limbs broken; while others, in the kitchen, seemed to be kept to the tether by the not very euphonious oratory of the cook, and an occasional box on the ears. Our visitors penetrated through the door-way, and were greeted by sounds of the strangest and most discordant kinds. The harsh voices of men rose occasionally

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above the hub-bub of children, both being from time to time drowned in the crash of many ill-tuned instruments. Then there would come the sound of a smart blow, followed by a shriek and succeeded by what startled and shrieked as much as either, a brief but profound silence. They mounted the stairs, opened the school-room door, and became witnesses of a scene which neither of them is likely to forget in a hurry. The school-room was a huge hall, measuring perhaps 60 or 80 feet in length by 30 in breadth. Two enormous fire-places, so constructed as to burn an enormous amount of fuel without diffusing any proportionate amount of heat, testified to the good intentions of the architect. In other respects, the fitting up was meagre enough.

A single platform, whither, when the writing lesson came on, the children by classes were supposed to repair, occupied about 20 feet in the middle of the room. All the rest were void, except where chairs stood for the accommodation of the masters, and cages for the punishment of the boys. For in addition to the cane, the serjeant schoolmasters had at their command four instruments of torture, in the shape of iron cages, each occupying the centre of the room. Observe that these cages were constructed so as to render it impossible for the little prisoners to stand upright; who were required, nevertheless, to turn a heavy handle, and whose diligence, or its opposite, was marked by a process, which, if they did not see it, they never failed to feel.

Four or five groups of boys were gathered round as many serjeants masters, some bawling out sounds which were not words, though they were intended to represent them; some roaring forth arithmetical tables; some repeating the Church Catechism at the top of their voices; some conversing and all shuffling and struggling amongst themselves. There was no order, no regularity, no attention; indeed the latter would have been impossible, inasmuch as in the heart of the classes was one, more numerous than the rest, which seemed to be taking lessons on the fiddle. As to the acquirements of these poor lads, their proficiency proved on examination to be as such as might be expected. They could not read, they could not write, they could not cypher, they could not spell. They did not know whether Great Britain was an island, or how, if divided from France, the two nations were separated. "We can't help it, sir," said one of

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the Serjeant Schoolmasters "We never learned these things ourselves. How can we pretend to teach them?"

Equally trenchant criticisms of the education of the adult soldiers are found in a book by H. Marshall, published in 1846.²³ He wrote very scathingly of the level of education in the Army and suggested that, to improve the low standard into which the Army had sunk, the only remedy was the wide extension of moral and religious instruction.

From these and other reports it is clear that the early promise of the army schools had not borne fruit, and that in the 1840's all was not well with the state of education in the Army. One can understand the haste, therefore, with which Gleig and Baring approached Sydney Herbert, who, when he had previously been secretary to the Admiralty, had completely reorganised the Royal Naval School at Greenwich.

The necessary reforms did not take long to materialise. A full report by Prof. Henry Mosely of the Privy Council Office — the Board (now Ministry) of Education was historically a board or committee of the Privy Council — proved to the full that the supervision of commissioners and officers was an expensive farce and that the teachers were brutal and illiterate. The type of schoolmaster serving with regiments was already a source of dissatisfaction to Gleig; and between the public scandal of the Chelsea School and the low state of regimental instruction, Herbert and Gleig were able to find reasons for sweeping changes which they carried through in spite of opposition from the Horse Guards.

On July 2, 1846, a royal warrant announced: "Whereas . . . we have deemed it expedient to introduce into our Army a class of man better calculated to perform the duties of Schoolmaster, our Will and Pleasure is that such persons shall be appointed Schoolmaster Serjeants . . . and will rank next after the Serjeant Major. . . . An Inspector of Regimental Schools shall be appointed by our Secretary-at-War." This was the beginning of the Corps of Army

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Schoolmasters, which was to give way later to the Army Educational Corps.

Six years before, a royal warrant dated October 29, 1840, and signed by Thomas Macaulay, had provided for the establishment of one *schoolmistress* to every regiment of cavalry and every regiment, battalion or regimental depot of infantry. She was to instruct the female children of the soldiers "in reading, writing, the rudiments of arithmetic, needlework and other parts of housewifery, and to train them in habits of diligence, honesty and piety" ²⁴

This Corps of Army Schoolmistresses later became the Queen's Royal Army Schoolmistresses, whose members have served in every part of the British Empire and who are justifiably proud of belonging to the original women's branch of the Army.

But it was not enough to select better men for the posts of schoolmaster-serjeants. They needed training. Accordingly, on November 21, 1846, another royal warrant appeared ". . . With a view of securing efficient schoolmasters", established "at our Royal Military Asylum at Chelsea a Normal or Training School for masters, and a Model School for boys", upon the example of which regimental schools were to work. This normal school was the forerunner of the army schools of education long established at Shorncliffe, (England) and Belgaum (in India). The school at Shorncliffe was, at the outbreak of war in 1939, transferred first to Brockenhurst, later to Wakefield, where it remained until December 1945.

Regimental schools were still governed by the original warrant of 1812, in which a barrack-room, coals or candles "were provided for this service, and worse was the plight of the chaplains, who were ordered to celebrate Divine Service in the garrison riding school".

Gleig, however, as early as 1845 had suggested providing new barracks with a room which should serve the double purpose of chapel and schoolroom. In 1846-7, rooms of

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this kind were erected at Glasgow, Piershill, Parkhurst and Hounslow.

In all cases a portion of the east or north extremity must be cut by a curtain which shall measure not less than 12 feet from the wall. . . There must be on each side, within the curtain, small apartments measuring 10 feet square respectively, one of which shall serve as the Minister's vestry, the other as a space in which to put away, on Sundays, the school utensils, easels, maps, boards and master's desk . . . the intervals between these apartments must be filled up with the Communion space. When the curtain is dropped, the Church, so to speak, becomes hidden, and we have only the school-room before us.

The normal school opened in March 1847 with thirty civilian students who were bound in a bond of £50 to enlist in the Army at the completion of their training, which lasted two years. Naturally, a few proved unsatisfactory and were replaced by non-commissioned officers from regimental schools. Thus began the system of double entry — from civilian or military life — which continued as an essential feature in the recruitment of army schoolmasters. In 1847 it was decided that the number of trained masters was to reach a maximum of 165 in the future, when the cost of the whole school (cost of the school and additional pay to trained masters) would be £8000 per annum. (One of the earliest army schoolmasters was James Thomson, the poet. In 1850, at the age of sixteen, he entered the model school of the Military Asylum at Chelsea. His first appointment was as an assistant army schoolmaster at Ballincollig, near Cork, but in October 1862 Thomson was dismissed the Army, in company with other teachers, for some slight breach of discipline.)

In 1849 the first batches of students joined their regiments, where they were very cordially received. This is illustrated by a letter sent to Mr Fox Maule, the secretary-at-war, by the commanding officer of the 21st Fusiliers :

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The new system of education has already had a visible effect on the regiment in many ways. Many men have been able to fit themselves for promotion who were previously unable to do so ; others have learned to read and write, and have found occupation for time which was previously spent in public houses. It is very popular, and, next to the good conduct warrant, is, I think, the greatest boon the Army has received since I entered it. Experience has convinced me that crime has diminished as men have rational occupation and comfort in their quarters. We had very few defaulters during the past month, and in six days, none ; which is unusual in a place like Edinburgh, and is, I think, to be attributed to the school and the occupations attendant upon it.

This was an exemplary situation when one remembers that, apart from recruits who attended for two hours daily, attendance at school was voluntary.²⁵

In 1850 two new types of children's schools came into existence. These were . (1) infant schools, where boys and girls were instructed in reading and writing, and (2) industrial schools, where the girls were instructed in knitting, needlework and household occupations ; the younger boys could attend these schools if their parents desired. The soldier had to pay for the attendance of his children, the money being " appropriated to the use of the schoolmistress ".

On April 19, 1850, another War Office letter described the regulations for the appointment of a schoolmaster :

- (1) All schoolmasters had to be trained at the Royal Military Asylum.
- (2) His appointment was to rank next to that of the serjeant-major.
- (3) His pay was to be 2s. 6d. a day and beer money, " with an extra 6d. a day after such a period as the Secretary-at-War may decide ".
- (4) " When the Regiment parades for inspection, Muster, or to attend Divine Service ", he had to take his place at the head of the children wherever they were stationed.
- (5) " The application from the Schoolmaster for permission to marry should be forwarded for the consideration of the Secretary-at-War by the Commanding Officer accom-

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panied by his opinion of the character and respectability of the person whom the Schoolmaster is desirous of marrying."

- (6) For instruction the non-commissioned officers and soldiers were to pay: serjeants, 8*d.* a month; corporals, 6*d.* a month; drummers and privates, 4*d.* a month.
- (8) Assistant schoolmasters were to be appointed to help the schoolmaster.

These regulations were amended by a letter from the War Office in 1852.²⁶ Applicants for admission to the Royal Military Asylum now had to be full corporals and unmarried. Further changes were that when the schoolmaster moved abroad with his regiment, his wife was allowed to proceed with him, and that "the Garrison Schoolmaster will wear the same dress as that previously provided for him at the Royal Military Asylum, viz: 1 Frock Coat, 1 pair of Cloth Trowsers, 1 pair of Boots, all to be renewed annually 1 pair of Shoulder Knots, 1 Cap with Oilskin Cover, to be renewed biennially, 1 Sword, Girdle, and Waist-Belt". The schoolmaster was empowered to train men to act as assistant schoolmasters; under certain conditions these were given an allowance of 3*d.* a day when proficient.

According to Circular 1163 of June 12, 1854, however, which was sent out under the authority of Sydney Herbert, schoolmasters were no longer to be regarded as garrison, regimental or assistant schoolmasters, but were to be divided into four classes, the fourth class being assistant schoolmasters. Beer money was stopped for all classes. Instead of the colourful military uniform the schoolmaster was now to be provided with a plainer one* and was not

* A reason for the change of dress is found in the Second Report on Army Schools of 1865. The original dress "was found to resemble too much the undress uniform of a commissioned officer" and gave rise to inconveniences which were complained of by commanding officers, and even by some of the schoolmasters themselves. The new dress, "more in accordance with the military rank of the schoolmaster", was a blue frock-coat, as before, with chevrons (on both arms) of the colour and pattern of the chevrons worn by rifle regiments.

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allowed to collect fees direct from the soldiers as he had formerly done. To compensate, the schoolmaster was no longer expected to provide books and materials, which were paid for out of private funds. In order to encourage voluntary attendance at school, soldiers who attended without compulsion were supplied with free copy-books.

This principle was carried a step further during the term of office of Colonel J. H. Lefroy,* as inspector-general of army schools. A War Office letter of July 29, 1857, which was signed by Lefroy, stated that "payment of school fees is to be remitted in the case of men who are attending School for the purpose of acquiring a knowledge of reading and of the first four rules of arithmetic".

By 1859 schools had been established in Great Britain, Ireland, India, Gibraltar, Malta, Corfu, China, Africa, the West Indies, Australia, New Zealand and North America. In Woolwich was established what must have been one of the earliest of what later came to be called part-time continuation schools. The Royal Arsenal employed some 1300 boys, who were chiefly employed in the manufacture of cartridges. In 1857 the Royal Arsenal General School was formed for them, each boy attending for eight hours weekly.

Lefroy, who had been appointed to succeed Gleig in 1857, was aided by assistant inspectors, some regular officers and was also able to call upon some of Her Majesty's inspectors, in England, Ireland, Scotland and the three Presidencies of India. It is from their reports, together with memoranda submitted by isolated schoolmasters in the Colonies, that we get a picture of the state of education at this period.¹⁶

With the exception of small frontier outposts, every station of the Regular Army and the embodied militia was now provided with an army school. The accommodation and facilities varied greatly. Some of the larger schools were well equipped, but at Melbourne the men of the 40th Foot

* Later Sir John Lefroy, F.R.S., Governor of Tasmania

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were working in tents. At Hong Kong, with the temperature at 100° in the shade, three hundred men were crowded into a room designed for fifty. (One is reminded of the fortitude and courage of these old army schoolmasters in choosing a profession which might take them to the remotest places of the earth by a tombstone in the cemetery of the Chinese village of Stanley, near Victoria. It was erected in 1845 to the memory of Schoolmaster-Serjeant John Holme of the 98th Regiment) Supplies apparently came, or did not come, according to the vagaries of sailing ships. There are instances of indents being completed after two full years, as at Capetown in 1856-8. Here, during these two years, in a dark room paved with cobble-stones, the schoolmaster taught fifty men with the aid of a dozen (borrowed) slates and a pocket-map of the world. He had no pens and no blackboard.

Attendance was very irregular, and Lefroy, by pointing to the "low state of education", was quick to show that this was to be expected if the schools were not treated seriously. "The school in general gives way to everything instead of fatigues, which can be postponed, or parades which can be dispensed with, giving way to the school. Men have even been called out of school by the Regimental Serjeant-Major for the purpose of trying on clothing, or on other trivial grounds for which no one would dream of interrupting a parade."

Lefroy was not long in classifying the work of schools into four grades. In the lowest, to which all recruits had to attend two hours daily, according to a general order of the Duke of Wellington of 1849, he secured the abolition of fees. In this class it was considered that "adult pupils of average intelligence may be taught to read and write and made to master the elements of simple arithmetic in about 12 months, by attending school regularly for four hours a week". The other classes advanced by stages to such subjects as book-keeping, Euclid and fortification. A fee was payable for these classes, but even in the case of serjeants

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it amounted to only 2d. a week. By 1870 all fees had been abolished.

The effects of Lefroy's proposals may roughly be seen by comparing the "General State of Education in the Army" in 1859 with that of 1868.

Classes	1859		1868	
	Actual Number returned	Percentage	Actual Number returned	Percentage
1. Can neither read nor write	30,261	20.5	16,010	9.46
2. Can read but not write, or can barely sign their name	26,667	18.8	17,924	10.59
3. Can read and write	79,399	56.0	124,893	73.80
4. Have a superior degree of education	5,271	4.7	10,387	6.14

The supply of non-commissioned officers was a difficult problem, especially since regional administration and training were growing more complex every year. "Very few Serjeants are able to make out States, etc.", the commanding officer of the 60th Rifles wrote from Bangalore. Out of 121 candidates for the staff of the School of Musketry, seventy-seven were rejected through their "deficiency in writing and arithmetic".

Some units were therefore driven to setting up local standards before promoting non-commissioned officers. The 19th Foot (Green Howards), for example, before the days of the Crimea, required their privates, seeking promotion to Lance-corporal, to read, write from dictation and work "the 1st 4 rules". Before a man was made a serjeant, he was required, *inter alia*, "to write faithfully from dictation . . . to have a fair knowledge of grammar, and to show a general intelligence in history and geography". In some

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regiments there was a standing promotion board, composed of the schoolmaster, the serjeant-major and one or two colour-serjeants, under the direction of an officer. The regimental serjeant-major, who was reported in 1826 as being unable to read or write, would have found membership of this board an embarrassing duty. Until 1857 there was no regulation to prevent the courageous but illiterate soldier from becoming promoted.

But that was soon changed, and in a general order from the commander-in-chief, dated June 19 of that year, the promotion to corporal, *except in the field*, of any soldier who had not passed the lowest or fourth class was forbidden. In 1872, non-commissioned officers had to attend until they got third-class certificates, and, in 1888, the possession of second and even first-class certificates was made an essential qualification for promotion to the higher non-commissioned ranks.

A great difficulty of those days, which recently has been partially solved,* was the provision of suitable elementary books for illiterate adults. "It is neither edifying nor pleasant", as Gleig once wrote, "to watch a grenadier putting letters together, which, after he has succeeded in converting them into words, inform him that 'Tom is a good boy, and whys his top'" [*sic* !] This was even more admirably put by Lefroy in a paragraph which reveals a mind which fully understood the principles of adult education as enunciated today: "The state of mind of the ignorant adult differs essentially from that of the ignorant child, especially in possessing a latent fund of experience and observation, by appeals to which the judicious teacher can arouse an interest which cannot be awakened in the child, and in being accessible to motives and inducements which are inoperative with the child".

In 1856 the Privy Council made an attempt to raise the standard of education in the Army from the depths into which it had descended. An Order was issued (February 25,

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856), recommending that "the Education Department should for the future inspect the regimental schools in the United Kingdom and the training school at Chelsea and report on them to the Secretary of State for War. But this does not ever appear to have been done." ²⁷

Probably the best evidence of a new attitude towards education in the Army during the years following the middle of the last century may be seen from the list of lectures given to the Soldiers in Aldershot Camp, during the winter 1858-59". The lectures were given by volunteer officers, padres and serjeant-schoolmasters. Two brigade-majors spoke on "Wellington" and "The Australian Gold-minings". An artillery officer explained "The Electric telegraph" and a chaplain gave a "Reading". The lectures were illustrated by "magic lanterns" which were applied to various stations "with a view to enabling the schoolmasters and others to deliver instructive and amusing lectures to the troops". One colonel reported of the lectures that he "knew of no expedient which contributes largely to their instruction and amusement, or is better calculated to draw them away from demoralising pursuits". Boxes of slides "exhibiting useful and amusing subjects were in constant circulation among 41 stations at home and 25 abroad, excluding India", while "at some few stations electric apparatus has been supplied for the use of lecturers; and, as a general rule, can be done at stations where there is a permanent school, and where there is a schoolmaster competent to lecture on experimental science". ²⁸

The outstanding personality of the Corps of Army Schoolmasters was First-Class Schoolmaster Grant who lectured on "Curiosities of Air and Water with Chemical Experiments", and was responsible for the education of twenty thousand soldiers. His was a liberal conception of education for the Army of those days and was well received by the men.

The consequence of introducing a system of lectures can

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readily be imagined by anyone familiar with the army system. Regiment vied with regiment and schoolmaster with schoolmaster for quantitative results. Returns were rendered and printed in the most minute detail. Thus it became clear that Shipman of Dublin (nine lectures, five readings) was inferior to Foster of Ottawa (thirty-one lectures, ninety-nine readings), while the records of both were made known to Howard of Aldershot in order that he might be encouraged to do better than his recorded "one exhibition of comic slides".

Besides these lectures "on interesting topics", performances by Christy minstrels, community singing, dances, concerts, poetry readings and the use of make-shift gymnasia began to lighten the pages of reports and reveal a life which has not often been portrayed by the writer of Victorian fiction.

In India, the organisation of educational work can only be understood by remembering that the Governor-General ruled on instructions sometimes supplied by the Cabinet and sometimes by the East India Company, a system once described as "based on the principles of ventriloquism rather than those of statesmanship". There were two European armies, one serving the Queen and one the Company. Since the troops of the Company, being brigaded with the Queen's regiments, had evolved a school system very like that of the Home Army, there were also two Corps of Army Schoolmasters. On January 11, 1856, the Governor General signed an Order — equivalent to a Royal Warrant in Britain — which was modelled on the Warrant of 1854 and which made some uniformity in treatment between the two. The schoolmasters of the East India Company, however, did not long survive, for when Queen Victoria assumed full sovereignty over India in 1858, they were transferred to swell the ranks of the Corps of Army Schoolmasters.

The organisation of education in India before the amalgamation in 1858 has been described by H. Marshall in his

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*Military Miscellany.*²³ He suggests that in 1846 the work being done in India was much in advance of that being done for the troops at home.

Among the many important measures introduced by the Marquis of Hastings, when he was Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, was the liberal encouragement given to regimental schools, by the appointment of an assistant master, and an additional mistress and assistant, with monthly salaries, to each European corps, and by calling upon the resident clergymen to lend their active aid in the superintendence of these useful and benevolent institutions. He also set up barrack libraries at each of the seven European cantonments in the Bengal establishment.

Lord William Bentinck in his evidence to the Royal Commission on Military Punishments reported that

the soldiers in considerable numbers attend the schools and make a rapid progress in reading and writing. In India the regimental libraries of the soldiers generally contain from 500 to 600 volumes of well-chosen books ; they receive the leading newspapers and their reading rooms possess comforts and convenience.

The Indian Mutiny prevented Lefroy from obtaining full information about educational work in India, though it was obvious to him that much energetic work had been done. A normal school, similar to the one established at Chelsea, was instituted in each Presidency in 1856 ; but the school at Poona was operating some years earlier under the command of an army schoolmaster, with the acting rank of lieutenant. Here, in the first year of the Mutiny, fifty-six sepoy passed out as schoolmasters, having qualified in English and one vernacular language ; thirty-six British non-commissioned officers completed a six-months course of general education, after which ten volunteered to turn schoolmasters ; and twenty officers were ordered to join for a six-months course in mathematics and civil engineering, to qualify them for the Survey. Naturally, the events of the year prevented

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most of the officers from completing their course.

In other parts of the world, too, soldiers were sitting down at school desks to equip themselves for duties in a rapidly changing world. Some of them had enlisted for life, while none of them had enlisted for less than ten years. Living under the roughest conditions in practically uninhabited colonies or in the intolerable monotony of ill-equipped sailing ships, the soldiers of the Queen's Army yet contrived to carry on with their 'schooling'. The success of their efforts must be accredited to those individuals in regiments, commanding officers and private soldiers, who encouraged and fostered it and allowed it to evolve from within. Above all, credit must go to the men who were proud of belonging to the Corps of Army Schoolmasters and who laboured devotedly to help their fellow soldiers towards greater knowledge and understanding.

COUNCIL OF MILITARY EDUCATION

In 1857 there appeared in the Army List the name "Council of Military Education" against a side street off Whitehall. This body, which consisted of a "general, 2 colonels and a Fellow of the Royal Society, was originally designed to superintend the education of officers"; but in 1860 it was ordered to take over the superintendence of army schools, the post of inspector-general of schools being abolished. The most permanent of the Council's achievements was the institution, in 1860, of army certificates of education. This novelty was somewhat tempered by the attitude of the commander-in-chief, who left commanding officers free "to adopt them, or not, at their discretion". The certificates of 1864 looked something like this, although the certificates of 1860 had been issued on the recommendation of the schoolmaster : ²⁹

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V. R.

FIRST-CLASS CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

..... Assistant Inspector of Army Schools, having certified that..... of the..... under my Command, can read fluently any book of ordinary difficulty ; can write correctly a passage dictated from the same ; understands the mode of keeping Mess Book, Ledger and Regimental Savings Bank Accounts, can work Vulgar and Decimal Fractions, and Compounds Proportion ; and has a fair knowledge of general Geography and of English History ; I hereby grant him a certificate of Education of the First Class.

..... 186-

.....
..... Commanding.

The holder of a second-class certificate satisfied the following : " to read a book of moderate difficulty ; can write fairly a passage dictated from the same ; understands the mode of keeping Mess Book, Ledger and Regimental Savings Bank Accounts ; and can work questions in Practice, Simple Proportion and Interest ". For the third-class certificate : " read Easy Narratives ; can write fairly an easy passage dictated from the same, and can work, in Arithmetic, the four Compound Rules and Reduction of Money ". A fourth-class certificate came into existence in 1871 and disappeared in 1877 ; its standard was too low for it to be useful in any way.

The new regulations of 1863 saw many changes in the organisation of education in the Army. Commissioned rank was now introduced for army schoolmasters³⁰ But instead of the four classes of army schoolmasters, these were now reduced to two : (1) superintending schoolmasters, who were commissioned officers with the rank of ensign ; (2) army schoolmasters, who were non-commissioned officers

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ranking immediately below the regimental serjeant-major.

While eighteen superintending schoolmasters were appointed, however, the total number of army schoolmasters was now considerably below the previous total. This, together with the withdrawal of warrant rank from the older schoolmasters and the withholding of it from the younger ones, was the cause of a great deal of resentment. Since the re-organisation also meant the giving-up of the distinctive uniform of the Corps and the adoption of that of an infantry serjeant, the majority of schoolmasters, who had been brought in from civil schools, was considerably displeased. Until 1890 when 'warrant' rank was restored, a number of schoolmasters remained deliberately aloof from regimental life. Nevertheless, the general trend of reports testifies to enthusiastic and loyal service by most of the schoolmasters — who were recompensed in 1863 by the introduction of pensions — and to intelligent support by many commanding officers. Steadily the Corps acquired a tradition and *esprit*.

The great obstacle to constructive work was irregularity of attendance. Although the charges for admission to all classes had been abolished, the proportion of men attending did not improve. The position, still common today, was that, in 1864, where commanding officers were themselves in favour of education and encouraged attendance, the number of daily attendances was much higher than in those units where the commanding officer was either actively or passively opposed to education.

Compulsory education of the men had always been rather a difficult question. In 1811 Sir James Mansfield had laid down that it was no part of military discipline to attend school, and in 1858 the law officers of the Crown had supported this opinion.²⁷ In 1859, however, all recruits had been compelled to put in two hours daily at school, but in 1861 this practice was abandoned. It was accompanied by a great decline in school attendance at the depots. In 1872 a measure of compulsion was revived when all recruits were

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compelled to attend until they got a fourth-class certificate.

Yet, despite many improvements, the system of education was lacking in vitality and enthusiasm and needed to be torn from the shackles of energy-sapping military discipline and routine. In 1868 Colonel McCrea, the assistant inspector in Malta, wrote deploring "the absence of Life and reality, of warmth so to speak, in the system". "The Schoolmasters", he went on, "are an excellent, correct, class of men, but wanting in that happy fertility of resource, that variety of tone and tact essential for a right impression on our mental faculties." A certain amount of invigoration and reform was needed.

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Chapter Two

Reform and Reaction

THE last quarter of the nineteenth century saw a fair number of departmental changes, some of them arising out of the Cardwell reforms of 1870 and others out of the general educational ferment which led to the passing of the Education Act of that year. A new and better educated type of officer was produced by the abolition of the purchase system, and he began to pay closer attention to the education of his men. With the introduction of the short-service system — six years with the colours and six with the reserve — instead of the previous system of enlistment for life, as well as the changes in barrack-room conditions, food, recreation, and so on, the soldier now began to appear as a “humorous, human and sometimes heroic being” instead of the drunken sot that the Duke of Wellington had portrayed. (One of Wellington’s choicest utterances about the soldier was written down by Stanhope: “English soldiers are fellows who have all enlisted for drink. That is the plain fact; they have all enlisted for drink.”¹) “Gone to be a soldier” was no longer synonymous with “Gone to the bad”. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the better conditions of the Service attracted a more intelligent type of recruit. For him the educational system inside the Army had to be improved.²

One important change was the abolition of the Council of Military Education in 1870 and its replacement by a director-general of education. In 1871 regimental certificates were abolished, and a standard type for the whole Army was instituted.³ Another event which showed the apparently increasing importance attached to educational training was

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the regulation of 1881 which stated that promotion above the rank of colour-serjeant was to be made dependent on the possession of a first-class certificate of education. Within a decade, however, an economy wave had appeared and the findings of a Parliamentary Committee, which met in 1887, showed with what little esteem education was still officially regarded.⁴

Instead of regimental schools, garrison and station schools were to be substituted. The compulsory attendance of adults was to be abolished, and the number of schoolmasters was to be reduced by absorbing vacancies. The number of school assistants was substantially reduced while the Normal School at Chelsea was closed as offering an unsuitable training-ground for teachers of adults. From this time probationers were to be appointed directly to garrison schools in the first place as assistant schoolmasters. Another ruthless 'economy' measure was the appointment of acting schoolmistresses to infant schools at a small salary, without allowances or pension, in place of the trained army schoolmistresses.

Many of the changes suggested by the 1887 Committee may be ascribed to the mode of management of the schools since 1881. In that year, A. C. Gleig, a nephew of the old chaplain-general, had retired after being an assistant inspector and inspector for twenty-five years. For the next ten years the schools were managed by a succession of staff officers, appointed on the usual four-years tenure, a change which, according to the director-general of military education, caused a decline in efficiency "in the absence of the intimate knowledge of personnel and detail possessed by the former Inspector". In 1887, school districts were rearranged, and the number of inspectors was still further reduced.

The state of education in 1889 is described in the director-general's report⁵ Of the 265 schoolmasters who were employed in army schools, 149 of them were employed in

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home stations, 34 in the Colonies and 82 in India. One of the main duties of schoolmasters in other countries was the teaching of English to foreign troops. In 1892 English was being taught to corps of Asiatic troops in China, Singapore, Ceylon and Mauritius. Three coloured schoolmasters were attached to the West India Regiment.

An interesting observation in this report was that the number of acting schoolmistresses who applied for posts under the regulations of 1887 was much too small "to meet the requirements of the services, and it has been decided to revert to the former system of appointing trained schoolmistresses". Even trained schoolmistresses were difficult to get, and this was attributed to several causes. The salary was low — £76 11s. 9d. per annum — and service as an army schoolmistress involved service away from their homes and relatives with frequent long periods of service in India and the Colonies. Many schoolmistresses, too, suffered from frequent postings from station to station, while mothers who felt concern for their daughters' morals often objected strongly when the daughters wished to join a regiment as a schoolmistress. In any event, better employment was to be had in the civil schools near their homes. The total number of army schoolmistresses in 1889 was: first class, 27; second class, 83, third class, 141.

It is also made clear that the standard of education in 1889 was not so much above the general standard of education in 1870 as might have been expected. For this many reasons could be adduced and none more important than the rigid regulations which surrounded the Corps of Army Schoolmasters. Their enforced subservience to officialdom led to a breeding-out of initiative and to the growth of formalised instruction based on a stereotyped routine. "The regulations which bound it [the Corps of Army Schoolmasters] were arid and full of such detail as the suitable minimum number of words and sentences for the essay in the examination for the Second Class Certificate."⁶ The fourth-class certificate

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of education was of such a low standard that it was abolished by the Committee of 1887. A year previously no less than 36 per cent of recruits had failed to obtain it. When one recollects that the fourth-class certificate was only equal to the second standard in elementary schools, one can see that it was with good reason that the director-general pleaded for the retention and even extension of efficient army schools. The compulsory education of recruits was abandoned because it was considered to be "a waste of time to teach soldiers who were unable or unwilling to pass out of the lowest class".⁷

The effects of the changes proposed in 1887 were reported in 1893.⁸ The change-over from regimental to garrison schools led to some marked disadvantages. "The direct personal interest of Commanding Officers has largely been lost . . . there is a reluctance on the part of Commanding Officers to look into the affairs of a school over which they have no definite authority. The frequent change of the officer under whose control a school is placed tends to weaken responsibility for its management."

To counteract this decline in efficiency, the director-general introduced a system of surprise visits, whereby the inspectors and their assistants would descend on a school without warning and at irregular intervals. This is supposed to have led to a marked rise in the standard of schools. An attempt to retain the interest of commanding officers was made later when they and their seconds-in-command were ordered frequently to visit the army schools attended by the adults or children of their corps.

The abolition of compulsory attendance of adults meant that "comparatively few young soldiers have self-denial enough to spend some of their spare-time at school, and it consequently happens that when privates receive promotion, they almost invariably have to attend school compulsorily in order to obtain a second-class certificate, as without it they cannot receive any further promotion".

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In 1892 a new infantry drill book had appeared which laid down the postulate "that private soldiers shall be taught to think, and, subject to accepted principles, to act for themselves". In his attempt to improve the quality of education the director-general used the well-established army method of throwing this statement back to the higher authorities, as well as invoking a comparison between the standard of education in the British Army and some foreign armies. That he did not minimise the size of his task is seen from his remark that "in view of the state of education in the country as a whole amongst the labouring classes, it is not surprising that the state of education in the Army is not better than it is, and the day when Army schools for adults can be dispensed with seems to be as far off as ever". Despite all the frustrated hopes of the enthusiasts, however, it was a sober, comforting fact that in 1892 the following certificates of education were held by soldiers: first class 2,906; second class, 41,122; third class, 31,575. The percentage of certificates to total strength was 36.51 in 1892.

For the next ten years or so there were few changes in the organisation of army education from those already discussed, although, in 1898, the post of director-general of military education was abolished and the field-officer known as the director of army schools was made responsible for their general working. The period was one in which time was given to see how the innovations of 1887 and 1893 would work.

In 1896⁹ it was reported that the problems of accommodation were being faced and that new buildings were being made. One recommendation in the report was that "In order to meet modern educational requirements it is becoming more and more evident that every school should have at least one class-room in addition to the large school-room. Progress is greatly hindered when several classes are instructed simultaneously in one room by separate teachers. The noise occasioned by so many voices is very distracting

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to the pupils, whether adults or children, and imposes a severe strain upon the teachers mentally and physically. All new school buildings are abundantly supplied with class rooms." Besides the new accommodation — which did not always materialise — another matter which had caused anxiety for many years was referred to in this report "It is difficult to obtain satisfactory results as the desks and seats provided in adult and elder children's schools have been constructed for grown men only. These are unsuitable and oblige the children to sit in strained positions, which medical authorities state may give rise to permanent deformity. A new style of desk, with an adjustable rest to render it suitable for men and children, has now been designed and will be fitted to new school buildings."

In 1901 a committee was set up to enquire into the conditions of service of army schoolmasters.¹⁰ The committee discussed the difficulty of recruiting enough civilian candidates for posts as army schoolmasters. They decided that the dearth of candidates was due not to inadequacy of pay or the compulsory wearing of uniform but to the liability for foreign service and the increasing amount of evening work. Since the latter could not be altered without the employment of extra schoolmasters, it was considered that the duties of army schoolmasters could not be lightened. A recommendation that army schools should be subject to visits by Board of Education inspectors as well as the routine inspections by army schoolmasters, was rejected. A notable development in 1902 was the establishment of the Queen Victoria School at Dunblane as a memorial to Queen Victoria and to the Scottish soldiers and sailors who had fallen in the South African War. King Edward VII opened this School in September 1908, as a secondary boarding school for the sons of Scots who had served in H.M. Forces or the sons of men who have served in Scottish units of the Army. The school accommodates about three hundred boys.

In 1904 another committee was constituted and made

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detailed proposals about the re-organisation of army schools.¹¹

In the adult schools it was agreed that "the syllabus should be revised so as to lead to instruction which will be useful both for military purposes and the general welfare of the soldier". The schoolmasters' hours of work were considered to be excessive, and were to be reduced. This, and other proposals, would entail an increase in the number of schoolmasters and schoolmistresses.

An important recommendation was that the inspectors should be attached to inspectors of the Board of Education and should be allowed to accompany them when inspecting civil schools. The administration of the schools, the committee proposed, should be in the hands of a board of officers, not below field rank.

These recommendations were submitted to the Army Council and, as might be expected, "were approved with the exception of those involving additional expense". Nevertheless, a revised curriculum and improved methods of teaching were introduced and led to a marked improvement in the quality of army education.

The economy axe was equally in evidence two years later when another committee¹² recommended that infant schools everywhere should be abolished as soon as possible. Where civil schools were available for elder children, the army schools were to be closed. This meant that, as a general principle, schools were in future to be maintained only for adult soldiers, and no members of the staff were to be retained for the teaching of children alone. A memorable principle adopted by this committee was that "Commanding Officers should ascertain whether local facilities exist for obtaining technical or other advanced education, in order to bring such facilities prominently before their men". 1906 is also significant as the year when proficiency pay was first introduced for serving soldiers. In order to become eligible for proficiency pay it was laid down that a soldier had to be in possession of a third-class certificate of education.¹³

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The early years of the twentieth century are important, too, because of a lengthy and thorough enquiry into the whole system of army education which was carried out by Board of Education inspectors. They reported in 1907, and, as a result, the method of training army schoolmasters was more or less brought into line with that for civilian teachers in training colleges. Two years later army schoolmasters were recognised as 'certificated teachers' by the Board, and, on leaving the Army, were allowed to take up civilian appointments counting army service for increments on the recognised scale of salaries. This proved of immense value at the end of the First World War when many discharged army schoolmasters took posts as headmasters and teachers in civilian schools.

In this atmosphere army schools continued to make steady progress, despite all the limitations imposed by a traditionally cheese-paring attitude to education by the Treasury, and by 1914, the schools, the Corps of Army Schoolmasters and the Corps of Army Schoolmistresses had won for themselves a valued place in the historical records of the Army.

With the introduction of short service in 1870, the discharged soldiers' difficulties in finding employment caused great hardships and frequently acted as a deterrent to men who would have joined the Colours if their chances of securing employment on discharge had been more secure. It is surprising to find that the first real attempt to deal with this problem does not seem to have been taken until 1914. Then a committee was formed under the chairmanship of the Secretary of the War Office,¹⁴ and recommended that various measures should be introduced to train the soldier for a particular vocation and to find him a job on discharge. The report was sent to the Nathan Committee on Civil Employment of Ex-Soldiers, but the tremendous events of 1914 meant that this committee was unable to finish its work. The methods adopted for providing vocational training and

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of finding employment for discharged soldiers will be discussed later.

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Chapter Three

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WITH the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 educational activities virtually came to a standstill. A subject which in peace-time had not been received too enthusiastically was now unceremoniously thrown aside, and the Army went over completely to military training. Nevertheless, there were a few people whose chief interest had been in the training of youth — among whom Sir Robert Blair, then education officer to the London County Council, was one of the foremost — who believed that the mustering of large bodies of men brought not merely duties but also opportunities. An attempt, known as the White City experiment, was made to arrange interesting lectures to occupy profitably the spare evenings of the men stationed at that place. "The attempt failed because of the view taken by the military authorities, who were of the opinion that there was no leisure for anything of the kind when the time for turning civilians into soldiers was already curtailed beyond all precedent."¹

Occasional lectures to troops were still given; but apart from these "there was for two and a half years an almost complete absence of recognition that the young men entering the Army were possessed of minds, interests and prospects which neither preparation for war nor war itself could wholly divert or destroy".¹

This was the case, despite the fact that the demand for education was making itself felt the whole time. Indeed, education of an informal nature was continually being carried on by little groups of enthusiasts. One of the best examples of this was the production of *Trench Journals*. When the

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24th Division reached Ypres in February 1916, for example, there was an old tumble-down printing press in the cellar of what had been a stationer's shop. The sight of it gave the idea of printing a trench journal for the Division. This *Wyper Times* was probably the first of this type of publication to be published in France, or Belgium. It was first issued to subscribers on February 12, 1916, and continued to be printed at irregular intervals, changing its name according to the habitat of the publishers. The journal was conducted on the approved lines of the popular twopenny weeklies and aimed at being "interesting, amusing and edifying".

The lectures that were given were usually carried out by civilians through the Young Men's Christian Association Scheme. Long before 1914, the Y.M.C.A. tent had been an "accepted feature of the summer camps at which troops, both regular and territorial, were exercised".² To the centres, lecturers on all subjects were sent and, when war broke out in 1914, it seemed natural that this educational activity should continue wherever the Army might be. "In the autumn of 1915, a Y.M.C.A. Committee was formed to strengthen and extend such work. It consisted of members of the Association's headquarters staff and a few university people familiar with the needs and possibilities. Dr William Temple accepted the Chairmanship and Dr. Basil Yeaxlee was appointed Secretary."² The work went on intermittently throughout the War.

Where educational work was first actually begun on an organised basis, however, it is difficult to say or to trace to its source. In 1917 the problem of the young recruit and his special training requirements was attracting military attention and led to the issue on February 22, 1917, of an Army Council instruction (322 of 1917) which stated that, for soldiers under the age of eighteen and a half years, the period of military training would be six months, part of which was to be elementary education. A syllabus of

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elementary educational training was issued as a guide to commanding officers.

The first scheme of education to be brought into definite shape in the war-time army was at Brocton Camp, Cannock Chase Reserve Centre, an account of which has been given elsewhere.³ This pioneer scheme, like the provision made in Army Council instruction 322, was for the 'A IV' class of soldiers, the young soldiers who joined the army at eighteen but who were not sent overseas until they were nineteen. The authorities realised that for these young soldiers some form of educational training would be beneficial, and that their period of training was long enough to make such a scheme practicable; but for the adult soldier the intensive period of training of three or four months and the immediate drafting overseas which followed made any attempt at educational training impossible. With the older men education remained as a voluntary adjunct to their military life until service exigencies had completely changed.

The work at Cannock Chase later developed chiefly on the lines of vocational training, but towards the end of 1917 there was a growth of general education among the young soldiers composing the 23rd Army Corps.³ The syllabus included courses on citizenship; the development of the British Empire, the State, the constitution, local government, foreign relations and so on. For the older men, provision was made in each of the above schemes out of parade hours, usually in the evening, attendance being voluntary.

Classes were also started for 'A IV' soldiers with the Independent Force at Canterbury, eight hours a fortnight being allotted in training time, while attempts were also made to provide one lecture a week in parade hours to the older men. Again, a general educational scheme for 'A IV' soldiers was begun at Brentwood in the late autumn of 1917, but it was not really until the Armistice that the movement in Britain spread beyond the 'A IV' youths, "if such in-

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dividual efforts as the organisation of a large voluntary institute among the Royal Engineers more or less permanently employed at the ship-yards at Richborough be excepted " ¹

In France, as in Britain, the first definite system of educational classes was for young soldiers ; these were lads who had managed to be drafted overseas before they were nineteen. When their real ages were discovered, they were sent down from the front line and posted to companies of young soldiers attached to the army infantry schools. In the winter of 1917-18, Major J. H. Bowe, commanding the company attached to the 3rd Army Infantry School, started afternoon classes for his 120 young soldiers. The lads were excused attendance at parades to go to school — a very strong inducement. It is not surprising that although Bowe had no text-books, no special equipment of any kind (" a stable was used as a class-room and the door as a black-board " ¹), the little school flourished.

In the home armies there was no break in the constant preparation of drafts for overseas, but in France the conditions of warfare necessitated that the war-worn troops should have intervals of comparative rest. In the autumn of 1917 a scheme of education for the adult soldier was inaugurated by a series of lectures given to various bodies of troops by Captain (afterwards Lieut.-Colonel) D. Borden-Turner. To troops in the rest camps and back areas lectures were no novelty, but Borden-Turner's lectures were given to fighting troops and were " directed definitely to the imparting of such information on the current topics of the time as could be accurately gathered and safely given " ¹. The co-operation of the Young Men's Christian Association was enlisted in this scheme, and, in conjunction with other voluntary educational bodies, they sent out numbers of lecturers to all the five armies.

In April 1918 the civilian resources were co-ordinated by the establishment of the Y.M.C.A. Universities Committee,

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on which all the universities of Great Britain were represented by their vice-chancellors, while the local education authorities, voluntary and professional educational bodies, were also represented. Dr. D. H. S. Cranage became chairman, with Dr. William Temple as vice-chairman. The Y.M.C.A. bore the whole cost of the undertaking, including administration, fees and expenses of lecturers, purchase of books and apparatus, and so on. Altogether some £250,000 was spent, although the committee was given a free hand in carrying out the enterprise. "By far the greater part of the activity was overseas, because most of the troops were there, but, the work in the home camps also grew."² Wherever Y.M.C.A. centres were established in Great Britain, popular lectures were arranged, while a considerable amount of class-work was also carried on. "Dr. Alex. Hill, formerly Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, was appointed the committee's director in England and there were twelve divisional educational secretaries. A notable piece of work was the Red Triangle College at Aldershot, where, under Mr. S. A. Williams, civilian teachers conducted classes in a great variety of subjects attended by 12,000 Army and R.A.F. men."²

It is interesting to observe that the beginnings of the educational scheme in France were wholly unconnected with those in Britain. From these beginnings, at home and abroad, the way was cleared for the introduction of an organised scheme of education, at a later stage, by the Army Council.

It is significant that, following the English educational tradition, these early experiments were of a voluntary kind in so far as they were not the outcome of any preconceived scheme imposed by the War Office, but were a spontaneous growth arising out of the needs and opportunities of the particular camps in which they were begun. . . . Also they were conceived with liberality of spirit, so that, while not neglecting the purely military side of the soldier's training, they aimed at his personal development in the light of his interests and duties as a citizen.³

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The first authoritative step in the provision of an organised scheme of education for the British armies came when the spontaneous movement that had arisen came to the notice of the commander-in-chief, Sir Douglas Haig, who at once realised the significance of the educational murmurings. "At an historic dinner one night at Haig's château, his personal enthusiasm was aroused, and he gave orders for the preparation of a scheme for general education throughout the Army in France with the object of, (1) making men better citizens of the British Empire by widening their outlook and knowledge, (2) of helping them by preparing them for their return to civil life"⁴ This incident occurred during the winter of 1917-18, and when one remembers the enormous responsibilities that Haig bore in preparing for the expected German offensive of the following spring, generous tribute must be paid to his wisdom and long-sightedness.

The order outlining the proposed scheme of education appeared on March 8, 1918. Authority was given for the introduction of a system of education for the armies and lines of communication; officers were to be attached to formations to organise the scheme. On March 14, 1918, the general principles on which the scheme should be based were decided. Provision was made for a supply of books, for which a sum of money was allotted from a private source, and various courses of instruction were prepared. A week later came the German offensive. But the movement was not exterminated — there was the case, by no means unique, of a battery sending an eager request for books the day after it was temporarily withdrawn from action — and the main task of finding officers for attachment to armies and corps was energetically pursued. With the appointment of officers to formations to organise such educational activities as circumstances permitted, these local activities became merged into a general scheme.

The report on education in France for June 1918 shows

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how far-reaching the activities had become. During the operations of the spring, several of the officers who had been appointed as education officers were killed, others were wounded, while the sick ones were sent home. But the scheme had gained a momentum that could not be denied. Although five army corps and seven divisions had no time to make returns, there were 6046 students in classes, 2500 of these being on the lines of communication ; 6194 enrolments for classes in prospect and 15,957 attendances at general lectures, the last two figures being exclusive of the lines of communication. One division reported that men out of the line were walking as far as three or four miles to attend classes and that " students who go into the line are in places keeping in touch with their instructors by letter ". Among the subjects covered in the fifty classes held were Chinese, Latin, music, engineering, accountancy, rope-splicing, piano-tuning, gardening, embroidery and singing, the last two for members of Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps

On May 17, 1918, the work had been further extended by the recognition of the Young Men's Christian Association as " the agent for carrying out the Army Education Scheme on the Lines of Communication ". Under Sir Henry Hadow and, later, Sir Graham Balfour, this agency rendered valuable assistance until April 1919.

Although not primarily an educational body, the Y.M.C.A. from the early days of the war supplemented its wide-spread efforts for the comfort and welfare of the troops by the provision of lectures and classes . . . Although by the nature of the case this educational work could not be systematised and co-ordinated to the same degree as the experiments conducted within the Army, as at Brocton and elsewhere, it was characterised by the same liberality and width of view. . . . From an early point in the war the Association arranged a constant series of lectures and classes in connection with its huts in France, Salonika, Mesopotamia, British East Africa, Malta, etc., conducted by qualified persons, while similar work was carried out in the Home camps.³

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Among the lecturers who went out to France were eminent historians like Sir Richard Lodge, Dr. Holland Rose and Professor Ramsay Muir, as well as distinguished men of science like Profs. E. B. Poulton, H. H. Turner and W. Bateson.

Vimy Ridge and subsequent battles interrupted the scheme for the whole summer [of 1917], but it was renewed and greatly developed in the autumn, when lecturers went not only to the bases but to the Army areas too, and lectures were given daily within three miles of the front line.²

The scheme was so successful that it was repeated during the following year,

when the Y.M.C.A. Education Committee sent out 70 special lecturers for short periods . . . being sent to the Army areas, as well as the Lines of Communication. . . . At the same time, the Association was endeavouring to develop class teaching and more continuous study in the Base Camp headquarters, as at Calais, Abbeville, Etaples, etc., and qualified women were engaged and sent out as teachers . . .

In France, as at home, classes in modern languages were a regular feature of the Y M C A work, and at these centres at the Base Camp headquarters a considerable amount of language teaching was done. At Etaples, for instance, early in 1918, over 1000 men were taking a course in the French language.³

In the other war theatres similar work was carried out by the Y.M.C.A. Universities Committee. Prof. J. J. Findlay went as director to Salonika and Mr. J. O. Dobson as education secretary to Italy, together with the necessary teaching personnel. In Palestine advisers were sent out to be attached to various divisions and lines of communication, while in Malta some good work was done by Mr. T. Wheeler.

From Mudros Mr. J. E. Neale developed the interesting enterprise of lecturing on board ships in the Aegean. The British commandant of internment camps for officers and other ranks in Holland asked, in May 1918, for co-operation in organising

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educational activities. Ten lecturers were sent under Mr. G. P. Bailey and accomplished a great deal, especially among the men of the Naval Division at Groningen. . . . Music was an important item in the programme and Mr. Percy Scholes, after a year's stimulating work in France, took general direction of this section, arranging the appointment of sixteen highly qualified musicians as organizers and chief teachers of music in England, France and Holland, with one — Mr. Gustav Holst — in Salonika.³

In April 1919, however, the British Army of France and Flanders was formed from the troops on the lines of communication and "the Army was able to take over undivided responsibility everywhere for the education of the soldiers". The help of the Y.M.C.A. as an administrative organisation was no longer necessary.

The progress of the scheme after its official launching until early 1919 is described in Sir Douglas Haig's final despatch dated March 21, 1919 :

In the early spring of 1918, the foundations were laid of an educational scheme which might give officers and men throughout the Army an opportunity to prepare themselves for their return to civil life. Delayed in its application by the German offensive and the crowded events of the summer and autumn of that year, since the conclusion of the Armistice the scheme has been developed with most excellent results under the general direction of the training sub-section of my General Staff branch, and generously supported in every possible way by the Educational Department at home.⁴

In the early stages, developments in Britain and in France had taken place side by side, with little attempt at co-ordination. In Britain there was intensive training for the trenches ; in France the deadly monotony of trench warfare. Experience had shown the necessity for education both in training and on active service. At a conference held at the War Office on May 27, 1918, it was decided to link up the scheme in France with that in Britain. A central committee was appointed, representing not only the armies in Great

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Britain and in France but also the Board of Education and the Ministries of Labour and Reconstruction. The representative of General Headquarters, France, was Major Lord Gorell, who was now appointed to the War Office as "Captain, attached Staff Duties 4 in charge of the direction and co-ordination of the educational scheme of the Army".¹ This was a unique appointment in the history of the War Office. Soon this was modified and instead of the one attached staff captain in S.D 4 was substituted a new department known as S.D.8, consisting of a deputy director of staff duties (Lord Gorell), an assistant director of staff duties (a civilian appointment) and some staff officers.

The first task of the new deputy director of staff duties (education) was to prepare a scheme applicable to the Army as a whole. The second task was to get this scheme accepted by the financial authorities, and the third to get the scheme into operation with the least possible delay. Thanks to the interest displayed by the Secretary of State for War, Lord Milner, financial sanction was obtained, and on September 24, 1918, the scheme was announced with all the authority of an army order. This Order (295 of 1918) was the first official recognition of educational training as part of military training in war-time.

The scheme dealt with education in the Army both during the continuance of hostilities and during the period of demobilisation. Its objects were described as being — (a) to raise *morale*, both indirectly, by providing mental stimulus and change, and directly, by providing lectures on German methods, aims, etc.; (b) to broaden and quicken intelligence, both by stimulating the desire for study and by giving men a wider realisation of their duties as citizens of the British Empire; (c) to help men in their work after the war by practical instruction. Except for the 'A IV' soldier, attendance at classes remained on a voluntary basis. Authorisation was also given for the purchase of libraries, text-books, stationery and other requisites.

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The scheme, which was later modified by Army Order 18 of December 20, 1918,

covered the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Salonika and Egypt. It provided for the creation of a teaching staff from among the Army personnel and authorised the appointment of education officers and instructors on a given scale proportional to requirements for Young Soldiers and Graduated battalions, and for each Army Corps, Division, Command Depôt, Special Camp and Base. Education Officers were also authorised for hospital areas, defined in accordance with the size, number and location of hospitals in Great Britain. Provision was made for co-operation with Local Education Authorities by the authorisation of payment to them for the organisation of classes, more particularly in technical and vocational subjects. Syllabuses and schemes for courses of study in general, technical and commercial subjects were published with the Army Orders, including a special curriculum of general education for Young Soldier battalions, together with suggestions for "practical instruction" in relation to the needs of a trade or profession. Provision was also made for elementary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic for backward men.³

With the recognition of education as an essential part of military life and the consequent setting-up of S.D.8 at the War Office, the energies of the new department were used in fostering the scheme so that it might develop as quickly as possible along the lines of the army order. Accordingly, two sections of S.D.8 were established. The first was to deal with educational and administrative questions under the immediate authority of the civil assistant director of staff duties, and the second with questions of resettlement and reconstruction and the issuing to the troops of information acquired by liaison with the Government department concerned and the demobilisation authorities. Sir Henry Hadow was appointed to the first post, and his place in France as director of education to the Y.M.C.A. on the lines of communication was taken by Sir Graham Balfour. Sir Theodore Morrison became head of the second section.

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By the end of October 1918 the organisation had taken shape. The extent of the scheme is seen by the fact that for each book needed for general use at least fifty thousand copies were required. The Stationery Office was entrusted with such orders for books and stationery as finances allowed ; but it was not until January and February 1919 that supplies began to be adequate. To meet the insistent demand for educational books, appeals were made to schools and other institutions for gifts of books which were no longer required. These were sent out to fill the gap until the official books could be printed. In the first four months after the issue of Army Order 295, the total number of instructional books despatched to the troops at home and abroad was 245,476.¹

On October 18, 1918, the first army education circular was issued. The object of the circulars was "to convey to Education Officers information of a general kind bearing on their work". The first one was issued by the section of S D.8 concerned with reconstruction and re-settlement, and gave information about the progress of the scheme and of the conditions of industrial and professional life at that time, together with the various avenues of employment open to soldiers at home and in the Dominions. Later, the circulars were issued about every three weeks, and by the time the last one appeared (April 15, 1920) were going out to every unit in the Army at home and overseas.

A further development at this stage was the issue of lecture notes for potential instructors. After an address to the Senior Officers' School, Gorell was told that most officers would gladly lecture to their men if given any material on which to base their remarks. To meet this request, a series of 'outline lectures' was issued "for the use both of instructors and Commanding Officers and others who may be desirous of lending their assistance to promote the success of the scheme among the troops under their Command".⁶ Among the subjects dealt with were: education and the soldier ; parliamentary government ; the spirit of the Middle

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Ages ; the political relations between the various parts of the British Empire , and the ship-building industry.

At the same time, and as an extension of the system of lectures given by regimental instructors, the help of civilian lecturers was obtained.

Volunteers from all possible sources were enrolled, and by the end of April a rota of upwards of 500 had been drawn up, covering a great variety of subjects, and including members of universities and learned societies and other specialists. A large proportion of the lectures are illustrated by slides, films, diagrams, demonstrations or experiments, and lectures on art or music can be accompanied by practical illustrations. The Armies in France were felt to have the first claim, and by the end of December over 60 lecturers had gone overseas. Lecturers under General Headquarters in France and Flanders and in Italy still travel from centre to centre visiting the chief towns in British occupation and other places where there are large concentrations of troops, while a lecturers' château has been established at Cologne to serve the Army of the Rhine.³

Proof of the desire to use every up-to-date means in the education of the troops was illustrated by the formation of a War Office film library, consisting of more than a hundred films dealing with industry, science, literature, history and geography. The films were sent out to units and hospitals for use in garrison and hospital theatres which possessed projectors, while in places where no official projector was available, a money grant was made so that the films could be shown in a local cinema.

In concluding this section on the work achieved during the Great War, the words of Dr. Basil Yeaxlee³ will furnish a sound idea of the then prevailing spirit :

It is tempting to write of the keen personal interest shown by Ministers with whom one so frequently had to do in maintaining the necessary co-operation with their respective Departments — Mr Lloyd George and Mr. Churchill, Lord Derby and Lord Milner, Mr. Fisher and others. It would not be easy to forget

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... a midnight conference of representatives from all five Armies at Poperinghe in midwinter with air-raids punctuating the barrage ; the discovery of men working at literature and music in their dug-outs at Ypres when it was not healthy to be above ground for more than an hour or two in the twenty-four ; or a popular don setting off " up the line " with an umbrella. But within the limits of a relatively brief experiment, with all its humours, blunders and unexpected difficulties, something not altogether ephemeral was achieved on a basis of cordial co-operative relationships between soldiers and civilians at all levels of authority and responsibility.

AFTER THE WAR: THE INTERIM PERIOD

Six days before the Armistice of 1918 the original scheme was considerably extended when sanction was given for the following : an increase in the number of education officers as organisers ; the formation of an instructional establishment and of two central schools of education ; authority for the expenditure of considerable sums of money on books, equipment and materials of various kinds.

Sanction was also sought for the provision of at least one educational hut in each divisional area in France and Italy, but this was not given. This difficulty was surmounted by arrangements with the Church Army, which placed its huts at the disposal of the officers at certain times.

Thus, on November 5, 1918, a scheme of considerable extent had been prepared — on paper. But despite all the haste with which the new extensions had been prepared they arrived too late, and with the coming of the Armistice they needed further amendment.

Fresh opportunities for educational training had now arrived. The end of fighting meant that the thoughts of the millions who had enlisted ' for the duration ' were turned towards the prospect of early demobilisation, and the resumption of civilian employment. But the enormous size

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of the Army meant that the process of demobilisation would probably be a lengthy one. During this period of enforced retention in the Service, the extreme value of an educational programme was seen by everyone, the officers and men who needed it and the controlling authorities in whose power it was to provide it.

Education thus assumed an enhanced position in the weekly training programme at home and overseas. After four years of preparation for destruction, men turned gladly to the means which would re-fit them to tackle the tremendous problems of reconstruction.

To a limited extent, the expansion of educational work that was bound to come with the Armistice had been foreseen and provided for, as the scheme described above clearly shows. A beginning had also been made to meet the shortage of education officers by the introduction of a two-weeks course at the University of Cambridge, the courses dealing with the duties these officers would have to perform as organising officers in their respective areas. On November 11, 1918, S.D.8 and higher authorities realised that their preparations had been inadequate to meet the new conditions, and the organisation was again revised.

On December 9, Army Order 3 was issued, describing an accompanying pamphlet called *Educational Training Scheme II*. This order stated that educational training "can no longer be regarded as a secondary consideration, and as much time as can be made available from the necessities of military service should now be devoted to it". Until September 1918 the official scheme had applied only to the Forces in Great Britain; but before the new arrangement of December 9, 1918, educational training was also being carried out among the Forces in Ireland, Salonika, Egypt and Mesopotamia. This new army order authorised a definite establishment of supervising officers and instructors to deal with the work in all these Forces, and, in general, accepted and extended all the recommendations prepared in the paper

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scheme of November 5, 1918. A further development was the extension of the work to military hospitals in Great Britain. Great importance was attached to this work "because the awakening of mental interest accelerates recovery, and because, unless their minds are occupied, patients are in danger of being enervated by hospital life and of sinking into a condition of apathy, in which they are incapable of exerting themselves to earn a living".⁶ Education officers were consequently authorised for hospital areas, defined in accordance with the size, number and location of hospitals in Great Britain. In the hospital scheme a special feature was made of vocational training, such training having been found to be of great curative value, especially in orthopaedic and neurasthenic cases.

Two other outstanding developments took place with the issue of the December Army Order. The first was the authorisation of active service army school certificates — as distinct from the pre-war army certificates of education — which recorded a summary of work done and examinations passed and which the soldier could take with him on his return to civil life. The second was the establishment at Oxford and Cambridge of schools of education to train officers and non-commissioned officers in the art and methods of teaching. The Cambridge School was held at Corpus Christi College and accommodated twenty officers and a hundred non-commissioned officers on each course. Here an attempt was made to train instructors for the 'A IV' soldiers. At the Oxford School, which took two hundred officers each course, and was held at Trinity and Hertford Colleges, the courses were intended to help instructors in the education of older men. The duration of the courses at both schools was a month. An interesting feature of the Oxford School was that Albert Mansbridge, who had formed the Workers' Educational Association in 1903 and the World Association for Adult Education in 1918, became one of the instructors.

On the vocational side, one of the developments in the

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early part of 1919 was the setting-up of two Army Schools of Instruction, one at Elstow, near Bedford, and one at Catterick Camp. They were opened to meet the needs of many of the young officers who had joined the Army at the age of eighteen or nineteen without a profession and who now found themselves awaiting demobilisation with no other calling but the Army. Each School accommodated two hundred students and provided instruction in commercial, scientific and technical subjects. That they achieved some measure of success may be seen from the statement that of the 1500 to 2000 officers who passed through the Schools between the time of their opening and July 1919, many of them asked to return to the School a second time and often even a third. The Schools were closed in July 1919, owing to the great reduction in numbers of officers awaiting demobilisation.

The issue of the official army scheme was followed by the transference of the Army Schoolmasters' Department to the Staff Duties Directorate. All educational training was thus unified as one organisation under the General Staff, the branch responsible for purely military training.

After all the tribulations that army education had undergone, the appearance of Army Order of December 9, 1918, indicated that all seemed set fair for the implementing of a programme which had been given a favourable reception on all sides. The military authorities were anxious that educational training should be introduced wherever possible; the men were anxious to know that they had not been forgotten, and that schemes were ready to help them to re-equip themselves for the new lives ahead of them. The Armistice had thus brought unlimited opportunities for promoting education to this expectant Army.

At a time when all seems well, dangerous situations are wont to appear; and this was no exception. On December 10, a crisis developed which threatened to upset the whole educational organisation. A casual remark which was overheard by Lord Gorell convinced him that the whole of

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Class 43, consisting of teachers and students, could claim to be demobilised forthwith. S.D.8 was not informed officially, but the truth of this remark soon became apparent. If all the teachers and students had been demobilised together, the existence of the whole scheme would have been in jeopardy, since the greater proportion of the officers and men who were teachers in civil life had formed the majority of the original educational instructors. Although it was recognised that, on the whole, this demobilisation was a wise and necessary step in the country's interest, the very fact that many of this class had no immediate jobs to go to suggested that the Army's own interests had been completely overlooked. This was not far from the truth, and action was quickly taken to meet the threat. On December 20, 1918, a further order was issued which authorised extra-duty pay or promotion for those officers and men employed as educational instructors. By this means, many teachers, who were not particularly anxious to return to civilian life immediately, were induced to remain in the Service and so helped to stabilise the scheme at the very moment when help was most needed. During the months of December and January, educational activity was at its highest, the Army "containing upwards of 3,000,000 students".⁷ So another crisis was surmounted and "enough remained . . . to enable the educational organisation . . . to pull itself together again, create, discover, invent, fresh instructors and hold upon its destined path to permanence. . . ."¹

An indication of the amount of work that was being done at this period is seen in the report of the Adult Education Committee of the Ministry for Reconstruction, 1919.

After the signing of the Armistice in November, it was found possible greatly to accelerate the process of putting the Army scheme into operation. According to an Army Estimate in February 1919, there were then between 400,000 and 500,000 men attending classes in France alone, and at least 200,000 in

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Great Britain. An estimate for Italy in the month of December gave 13,000 in classes and over 26,000 attending Lectures

Altogether, according to an estimate made by Lord Gorell, about a million men of all ranks came under the direct influence of the army scheme in one way or another.

As the demobilisation programme gained momentum, the work of army education was necessarily modified to deal with the smaller and more easily handled numbers of the armies of occupation. By March 1919 the activities were directed to meet this new phase.

All previous army orders referring to education were superseded by Army Order 7 dated March 13, 1919.⁸ The value of education to the soldier training for war, the soldier on active service and the soldier awaiting demobilisation had been clearly demonstrated and now attention was focussed on the problem of providing educational facilities for soldiers who would make up the armies of occupation. The new order authorised establishments to deal with educational training in the home armies, the army of the Rhine, the armies of the Middle East, Egypt, Murmansk, the troops in France and Flanders and the force in Italy. It was also stated that the extension of the scheme to the garrisons of the Crown Colonies was under consideration — a development which took place early in the following year.

Apart from 'A IV' soldiers and the armies of the Rhine, the scheme remained on a voluntary basis.

Despite the valuable work that was being done by other armies of occupation, public attention became concentrated on the work on the Rhine. Here the Army had double the number of instructors granted to the other armies — four officers and eight non-commissioned officers to a battalion — and educational training in general subjects was part of the training in each unit. Unfortunately, no technical training of quality could be given in units, and to meet the needs of young soldiers whose apprenticeships had been broken through being called to the colours, general headquarters

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colleges and corps and divisional schools were formed so that these young soldiers would not be too seriously handicapped on their return to civilian life. The G.H.Q. College was situated in the Geschoss-fabrik, Siegburg, in close proximity to other large engineering works. Courses of six weeks' duration for 175 students were arranged as from June 21, 1919, the number increasing later to three hundred. In addition to these courses, between February 1 and September 6, 1700 skilled tradesmen and apprentices were attached to technical units for 'refresher' courses. By agreement with the Ministry of Labour, it was arranged that time in the Rhine army should count towards apprenticeship and that time spent on a course at the Technical College should be counted for the apprentice as time spent at his trade.

The G.H.Q. General and Commercial College was started in the Handelsrealschule, Cologne, on January 17, 1919. It included a popular commercial wing, an art branch and music classes, as well as classes for ordinands, forty-eight of whom had passed through the College by August 25, 1919.⁷

An amalgamation of the 2nd Army Agricultural College and Number 5 G.H.Q. School of Chemistry led to the formation of the G H Q. Science College at Bonn on March 26, 1919. Though much admirable work was done in the science wing, the general standard was not high; the agricultural wing, on the other hand, was extremely successful. Agriculture had always been a popular subject in the Army, and on the Rhine it flourished.

So that the soldier might continue his studies on returning to his unit after attending one of the colleges, a G.H.Q. Correspondence School was started in June 1919. It was with some sense of achievement, therefore, that the official report stated: "No man need, in the Army, fall behind his civilian fellows, or be debarred from his own advancement by lack of education".⁸

Moreover, education had continued to prove its value in

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the lives of the four classes of soldiers who made up the home armies. In November 1918 the educational scheme had been extended to military hospitals in Great Britain, and here the problem was a difficult one. In November 1918 "there were 250,000 patients in the United Kingdom, of whom scarcely half could be accommodated in the large organised hospitals, and the remainder were scattered in innumerable auxiliary hospitals, and thus entailed continual movement of patients from the larger hospitals to the auxiliaries in which the earlier stages of convalescence were spent"³ Education officers were first appointed to the larger hospitals and then extended their activities outwards to the larger auxiliary hospitals, making use of local facilities and 'patient' instructors so far as possible. Their difficulties in trying to help wounded soldiers who had become 'hospitalised', and who suspected that the new educational 'stunt' was a means of making them learn a trade or occupation, and so deprive them of their pensions, were immense. But in spite of these difficulties, lack of accommodation and many other problems, the men were given sympathetic understanding and gradually the place of education officers in hospitals became established.

An impression of the educational services that were provided for the soldier awaiting demobilisation may be seen by the scheme carried out in one unit, the Machine Gun Training Centre, during the months of May, June, and July 1919. The Centre was at Grantham, and during the period under discussion consisted of two camps, one at Belton Park and the other at Harrowby. Seventeen officers and eight non-commissioned officers were employed as instructors under the education officer and in both camps parade classes and evening voluntary classes were held daily. Classes were held in some thirty subjects, including languages, commerce, science and vocational subjects. More general classes were held in the subjects for the first-, second- and third-class active service certificates of education, while

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special classes were formed for a few men who were practically illiterate. Parade classes were, of course, compulsory ; but that there was a real demand for education is reflected in the large attendances of all ranks at voluntary classes in such subjects as motor mechanics, shorthand, typewriting, book-keeping, mathematics and English.

All recruits to the Machine Gun Corps were seen by the education officer soon after their arrival at the camp, and the courses available in the educational scheme were described to them. Thus, when they were drafted to their respective units, they were sufficiently informed to attend educational classes without delay.*

Before passing on to the question of education in the Regular Army, it might be appropriate to survey, in general terms, the considerable development of education in the First World War and immediately after. It would be futile to attempt to assess the standard reached by this extraordinary growth. The activities were multifarious ; the effects, as in all educational activities, immeasurable. In some units the scheme was received with refreshing enthusiasm ; in others there were many who viewed it with suspicion and either opposed it actively, or, as is more usual and effective in the Army, allowed it to fade out through passive acquiescence. From all the conflicting evidence, however, one outstanding fact emerges. It had been shown to be possible " even in the midst of fighting, and still more after fighting, though still on active service, for educational training to be made to go hand-in-hand with military training ; to show that the more educated a man is, the more quickly and more efficiently he can be trained ".⁹ A tremendous task had been attempted and something had been done. Much of the work was slight and ephemeral ; some of it was more solid, while occasionally, a little reached a high standard. And when

* The above details are taken from a report (unpublished) submitted by Headquarters, Machine Gun Training Centre, to the War Office in July 1919

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one remembers the conditions under which the work was attempted, one must admire the courage of the men who took up the challenge and achieved what they did.

Viewed as a whole, it was a triumph of improvisation, and the surprising thing is that these activities were found possible at all in the face of the difficulties which must inevitably accompany any attempt at education among the soldiers of armies taking part in a great war, when all such attempts must be made subject to the overwhelming claims of military necessity. Indeed, when sufficient time has elapsed to enable the events of the war to be seen in their true perspective, the rise of the educational movement among the armed forces will stand out as one of the most striking and unpredictable. As the President of the Board of Education, speaking at the Cambridge School for Army Education Instructors, said : " Nothing in the shape of adult education has ever been attempted on the same scale in the whole history of the world ".

In closing the account of this period we must pay special and generous tribute to Lord Gorell for his imaginative and devoted service on behalf of the British soldier.

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Chapter Four

Education in the Peace-time Army

DURING the summer months of 1919, when the Regular Army was being reformed, the question that continually haunted the members of S.D.8 was whether the Army would be allowed to profit by the educational experience of the previous two years or whether it would be "reformed on the same uninspired lines as had governed its previous existence". Some military commanders had consistently opposed the development of educational activities, and their opposition did not lessen with time. But there were others who were convinced that the old emphasis on physical and technical efficiency was not enough. Sir George Higginson, for example, who had obtained his commission in 1845, when Wellington was commander-in-chief, wrote in 1916: "The appeal to the intellectual rather than to the physical powers of the soldier must gain force by the advance in scientific knowledge of the mechanical forces employed, and consequently the monotony of the barrack yard will find relief in the fuller exercise of brain power in training for the field"¹ A letter to Lord Gorell, written on July 8, 1919, from the reconstituted Staff College at Camberley — once said to be the place where people went to combine the necessary arrogance with their ignorance — contained these words: "People here enthuse on the scheme and realise it is IT. Hope you are insisting on keeping the scheme in its entirety for the future Army"²

Throughout the early months of 1919 the idea of the permanence of the educational organisation grew, and by the middle of the year military opinion had ripened suffi-

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ciently to make the inclusion of educational facilities in the Regular Army a practical possibility. But there was much uncertainty and uneasiness about the future, and, as a result, many men who would have been of inestimable value to the future development of the scheme were obliged to seek and accept posts in the civilian world which offered reasonable hope of permanency. Often they were forced into hurried decisions when Regular Army units were ordered overseas to relieve territorial troops still retained abroad. Under these conditions no continuity in administration or instruction could be expected. During the summer of 1919 these conditions were at their worst, but they continued in some degree right up to the issue of the royal warrant authorising the formation of the Army Educational Corps in June 1920.

On August 5, 1919, however, a statement of overwhelming significance to the future of army education was made. Replying to a question, the Secretary of State for War, Mr. Winston Churchill, informed the House of Commons that "It has been decided that education is henceforward to be regarded as an integral part of Army training". The turning-point in the history of the educational movement had been reached and for the next nine months preparations were made for the administration of the principle enumerated by Mr. Churchill.

One of the difficulties in deciding how the new educational establishment was to be framed was the position of members of the old Corps of Army Schoolmasters and Schoolmistresses. Previously, they had been concerned either jointly or separately with education at the three military schools (Royal Military School, Dover; Queen Victoria School, Dunblane; and the Royal Hibernian School, Dublin), and in the garrison and detachment schools at home and abroad where they took classes of infants, of boys and girls, and of recruits and other soldiers working for the various army certificates of education. In August

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1914 the schoolmasters and mistresses were working under Army School Regulations, 1911, an arid document which revealed how far army education had lagged behind civil education during the closing part of the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth centuries. Further, the schoolmasters were mainly recruited from the military schools, and as chances of promotion were almost non-existent it did not help to stimulate men who had already been selected from a very narrow field. To make matters worse, during the war period, the schoolmasters were compelled to carry on with their normal teaching duties, much to the chagrin of the majority of them.

While details of the new scheme were being worked out, the position of the schoolmasters became strained and precarious. In many cases they saw men being appointed to commissioned rank with qualifications less than their own. This, and other reasons, soon made it apparent to the directorate of S.D.8 that the difficulties could only be resolved by the formation of a unified educational service. The first step to this goal was taken in February 1920, when the War Office department controlling the army schoolmasters was taken over by S.D.8. Thus the Corps of Army Schoolmasters was liquidated after a life of seventy-three years.

The Corps of Army Schoolmistresses was unaffected by the changes in organisation, and continued to lead a separate existence, although arrangements were made for the long-overdue improvement of their training and for considerable increases to their rates of pay, which had been very low.

The principles on which the new army education service were to be based were first stated publicly by the Secretary of State for War in February 1920, when he wrote :

Experience gained in the very successful education scheme instituted during the war has enabled us to develop educational training as an integral part of the normal training of every soldier . . . Regimental Officers will be responsible for the

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elementary part of this training and will be assisted by an Education Corps, incorporating the Army Schoolmasters and Schoolmistresses, and the best of the present educational personnel.³

To ensure that the regimental officer would be able to play his part in educational training, regulations were issued stating that in addition to passing the specified military examinations, "a Lieutenant before promotion to Captain will be required to undergo a course at an Army School of Education and obtain a satisfactory certificate", while for promotion from Captain to Major one of the five papers prescribed was to be on the subject of educational training. The wise step of making the regimental officer responsible for educational training persisted up to the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939.

Details of the constitution and duties of the contemplated Army Educational Corps were presented to Parliament in May 1920, in the form of a "Report on Educational Training in the British Army" (Cmd. 568). An initial stage was prescribed which would last from the date of creation of the Army Educational Corps until September 1, 1923. During this period the inevitable difficulties of inauguration could be smoothed out. In June 1920 the Manual, *Educational Training*, Part 1 *General Principles*, was issued as well as the eagerly anticipated royal warrant authorising the formation of the Army Educational Corps.⁴ Thus, although many blights and droughts had threatened to nip the young growth in the bud on its way to maturity, the strivings of S.D.8 had borne fruit. To Lord Gorell, who, in the words of Brigadier C. G. Maude, later to become the controller of the Army Educational Corps, "has not been paid the tribute he deserves", must go most of the credit. But the fruit had still to be ripened.

The *Manual* consisted of seven short chapters on the principles and practice of adult education, and must take its place as one of the unique publications in military and educational literature. Unlike other training manuals, it

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had no military precursors, while in no other known book had the broad principles of adult education been previously expounded. The writers of the new book were therefore blessed with all the advantages, and suffered from all the disadvantages, of breaking new ground. It is no small reflection on the authors of the *Manual* that its fundamental plan, policy and statement of general principles, remained unaltered with the revisions that came in 1923 and 1931, the latter persisting as the official handbook up to the outbreak of war in 1939.

Army Order 273 of 1920, under which the *Manual* was issued, stated that *Educational Training*, Part 2, was in course of preparation and, when published, would supersede the old army school regulations. Part 2, however, was never published, and in September 1923 a revised and enlarged *Manual* was issued. This *Manual*, *Educational Training*, 1923 (*Provisional*), replaced Part 1 as well as the previously issued army school regulations. It thus became the charter responsible for the educational training of both the soldier and his child.

The establishment, pay and conditions of service of members of the Army Educational Corps were dealt with in Army Order 231 of 1920, as well as the transfer to the Army Educational Corps of army schoolmasters. Instead of the establishment of 350 (323 army schoolmasters and 27 inspectors) of the Corps of Army Schoolmasters, the new Corps was given a total establishment of 1023, made up of 428 officers and 595 other ranks, the latter constituting equal numbers of warrant officer and serjeant instructors. Unlike the old Corps, the Army Educational Corps was to be a fully combatant corps, its members wearing uniform of infantry pattern and the officers taking the same examinations for promotion as infantry officers.

Besides the members of the Corps of Army Schoolmasters, the personnel of the new Corps were selected from: (1) officers holding permanent commissions on the active list of

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the Regular Army and other ranks serving on normal army engagements ; (2) officers and other ranks serving on a temporary basis as education officers and instructors , (3) demobilised and disembodied officers and other ranks who were employed as education officers or instructors during their period of service ; (4) university graduates and other candidates with special qualifications who were not included in one of the preceding categories. A board of selection, under the chairmanship of Lord Gorell, dealt with the applications, and on November 24, 1920, the title ' Army Educational Corps ' first appeared in the *London Gazette*.

There is little record of the way the initial problems of organisation and administration were tackled by the new Corps in an army which needed time to recuperate and re-organise its forces after the bloodiest war in history. But there can be no doubt that all difficulties were met with the same enthusiasm and devotion to duty that had characterised the original members of S.D 8. By 1923, members of the Corps were carrying out their duties in the following places : Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Aden, Bermuda, Ceylon, Egypt, Germany, Gibraltar, Hong Kong, India, Iraq, Jamaica, Malaya, Malta, Sierra Leone and Tientsin.

The army order authorising the formation of the Army Educational Corps also stated the procedure that would be introduced for new appointments to the Corps after September 1, 1923, this date marking the end of the interim period. Candidates for commissioned rank would be selected from : (1) commissioned officers of not less than one year's service who held a university honours degree ; (2) commissioned officers of not less than two years' service who, although not in possession of such a degree, could satisfy the Board that they were exceptionally fitted for educational work ; and (3) warrant officers of the Corps who passed a qualifying examination. All selected candidates were required to obtain a diploma in education after attending a course for one year at the Army School of Education. Candidates for non-

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commissioned rank in the Army Educational Corps would be selected from: (1) serving soldiers who held the special army certificate of education and who were reported on satisfactorily after attending a course of two terms at the Army School of Education; (2) civilians who held an educational certificate equivalent to the special certificate: these were enlisted into the Corps as serjeants on probation and, with the exception of experienced teachers, were also required to attend an Army School of Education for two terms.

The distribution of personnel gave one officer and one serjeant to each battalion of infantry while each regiment of cavalry and brigade of artillery had either one officer or one other rank. These members of the Corps were to be regarded by the officer commanding a unit as his expert assistants whose duties were to carry out the advanced instruction and the conduct of examinations, to be responsible for general lectures and for supervision of books and stores used for educational training. They were also to aid and supervise the regimental personnel, who were to be the instructors for the less-advanced parts of the training, that is, up to the second-class certificate. Besides the attachment of Army Educational Corps personnel to units, each brigade, division and command headquarters had an education officer to supervise the educational training in a particular formation. Members of the Corps were also appointed to the staffs of the Army School of Education, the three military schools for boys and the garrison elder children's schools. Other personnel were attached to the War Office as inspectors of educational training, their duties being to assist the general officer commanding-in-chief in maintaining a uniform and efficient standard of educational training.

In 1922 it became necessary to re-organise this distribution of personnel owing to a decision made by the War Office to reduce the original establishment of the Corps. The Corps was cut by half when the Geddes 'axe' began to

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operate, and later there was a further cut which still more reduced the effectiveness of the Corps. No other change were made, however, and the distribution of personnel in the manner described persisted more or less unchanged up to 1939.

One point requires further emphasis. The principle adopted in February 1920, that regimental officers and non-commissioned officers would assist in the elementary training of the men was, as we have seen, re-stated in Army Order 231 of 1920. This was a distinct advance on the pre-war system in which the regimental officers took no part in educational training, and where, with the exception of the regimental non-commissioned officers employed as acting schoolmaster serjeants and assistants, the whole of the work was carried out by members of the Corps of Army Schoolmasters.

Under the new scheme, the regimental officers responsible for educational training were usually subalterns. It had been assumed by the Army Council that their knowledge of the 'general subjects' which they would be required to teach would be sufficient for them to carry out their duties efficiently. In many cases, however, it was realised that the young officer's knowledge was often not enough for him to carry out instruction in educational subjects with any degree of confidence. It was decided, therefore, to supplement instruction in these subjects by introducing an educational syllabus into the curriculum of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, the school from which the Army obtains the majority of its officers. The special provision of educational training for "Gentleman Cadets" was begun in September 1921, when 11 officers of the Army Educational Corps were appointed to the staff of the Royal Military College. The course of instruction in "Academical Subjects" included English, history, geography and science.

The Army School of Education was set up at Shorncliffe, Kent, and became, in effect, the Army's training college for

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teachers. The type of instruction provided, however, was of a rather formalised and routine nature. One of the duties of the School was the training of regimental personnel who would be engaged on educational duties. The courses of instruction at the School for regimental officers were designed :

- (1) To bring to their knowledge methods of instruction, to assist them, firstly, in promoting their greater efficiency in the instructional side of their military duties, and secondly, in carrying out the educational training of the men under their command.
- (2) To familiarise them with the principles and general organisation of educational training in the Army.
- (3) To give them advanced instruction in the subjects they select for special study.
- (4) To stimulate initiative and variety, within such limits as may be prescribed, in the organisation and application of educational training in their units, with special regard to the conditions and discipline of the Army, the daily calls on the soldier in training for his special functions, and his ultimate return to civil life.³

The value of such a course to regimental officers is apparent.

Reference has already been made to the three military schools for boys. The only administrative change that affected them in the new regulations was that the staffs were now to be composed of members of the Army Educational Corps, and in the children's schools, too, the former work of the army schoolmasters was taken over by personnel of the Army Educational Corps.

An extract from the *Manual* relating to the principles which unit personnel should adopt when taking educational subjects with soldiers bears a close resemblance to accepted educational principles of today :

The chief concern of instructors must always be to avoid the spirit of the classroom. Soldiers, whatever their degree of mental attainments, are not boys. They may be men of some judgment and experience of practical affairs, they are at the least lads who

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have had some knowledge of work and the world. It follows, therefore, that, whether they enter the Army educational classes at a more or less advanced stage, or need in the first instance only elementary instruction, their educational training should be linked as closely as possible not only with their military needs, but also with their private pursuits or interests.

The general educational principles also stressed the need for education in citizenship and suggested that

its basis must be wide for it aims at enabling a man to arrive at a conception of his relation to the community as a whole. Indeed, " civics ", which deals with the full and many-sided life of the members of a state, the life of civilised man, his interests, aims, responsibilities and duties, is less a separate subject, than a theme running through other subjects, an aspect from which these may be viewed and studied

The more detailed recommendations of the *Manual* affecting the actual instruction of the soldier may best be described by considering the educational progress of a recruit who joined the Army in 1923. At that time the average age for enlistment was eighteen and a half years ; the knowledge of the recruit was usually very limited, and in many cases his intelligence had not been quickened by leaving school some four years earlier.

On joining the Army the recruit was posted to an infantry depot for his early training. There he would spend the first four or five months of his service. The training programme at the depot included at least five hours' educational training each week. It was assumed that, at the end of the seventeenth week of training, all recruits should have at least obtained the third-class certificate of education, and a general principle was laid down that no recruits should leave the depot without having reached this standard. This did not work out in practice, and in many cases even the low standard of the third-class certificate was not attained.⁶ For the third-class certificate a candidate was examined in reading, writing, arithmetic and regimental history. Regimental

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history was included not only to satisfy the young man's natural curiosity about the new community of which he now found himself a member, but also to arouse in him that mysterious but invaluable adjunct of military efficiency called *esprit de corps*.

From the depot the recruit proceeded to a field unit. For the more able recruits, instruction for the second-class certificate would already have begun at the depots, and, as for all candidates who had obtained the third-class certificate, would have continued with the rest of his training at the field unit. This had to be done voluntarily and not in training time, a condition which also applied to the first and special certificates. To obtain the second-class certificate, a candidate was examined in English, practical mathematics and map-reading. An interesting side-light on the changed attitude to education is that, before the First World War, soldiers were granted proficiency pay if they possessed a third-class certificate of education. After 1919 a second-class certificate was necessary before this additional pay was granted. In some units, for the man who sought promotion there was extra stimulus in working for the second-class certificate. Without it, he could not be promoted to the rank of corporal.

For the first-class certificate the soldier had to reach the requisite standard in English, mathematics, geography and map-reading. A first-class certificate was necessary before a man could be promoted to warrant officer and a special class was needed before he could be commissioned. To obtain a special class certificate, a candidate had to pass an examination in English, mathematics, an ancient or modern language, map-reading and two other subjects, of which a wide choice was given.

Another educational necessity was formally authorised soon after the *Manual* appeared with the announcement that libraries would be set up. Authority was given for the establishment of unit libraries at each regiment of cavalry,

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brigade of artillery, battalion of infantry, tank battalion and infantry depot throughout the Army.⁷ These libraries, which were quite distinct from the 'instructional' books, and any other libraries which units may have possessed, consisted of 175 volumes, including fiction and more serious reading matter.

Besides the unit libraries, libraries of 120 volumes were set up at command headquarters to be available for personnel stationed at the headquarters as well as any other units in the particular command. Even the 'sacred', military precincts of the War Office were invaded, and here a Central Lending Library was established, "intended to meet the needs of individuals in the Army who hitherto have been obliged to provide books for themselves from other sources".⁸

One other development of considerable importance to all soldiers was outlined in the *Manual for Educational Training* of 1923. This was the problem of the re-entry of the regular soldier to civilian life—a problem which had been considered by various committees since 1870. Despite the enquiries and recommendations of the committees, however, very little had been done. On many occasions the army authorities had been attacked for the niggardly attitude they adopted to men who had spent the best part of their lives in its service, and who, when their time was spent, were cast off to make their way without trade or training. Compared with the attitude in vogue before the First World War, when no special facilities existed whereby the ordinary soldier could receive any vocational training to prepare him for employment on discharge, the *Manual* breathed a spirit which augured well for the future careers of serving soldiers. "It was realised that, while the life of the soldier involved physical effort and demanded initiative in dealing with military problems, these were different in kind and degree from those characteristic of civil occupations".⁵ Accordingly, a system of vocational training was introduced "to

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enable the soldier readily to adopt the qualities required, through his military training, and bring them to bear on conditions of civil employment".⁵

In the more technical corps, like the Royal Army Service Corps, the Royal Engineers and so on, men were already being trained as tradesmen in the more specialised trades. These men found little difficulty in obtaining employment on their return to civil life, and presented no marked problems. The problems arose in non-technical units where, apart from a small number of men employed in the regimental tailor's and bootmaker's shops, no opportunities existed for learning any kind of trade. According to the new regulations: "for men of non-technical units who show aptitude there are three definite stages of technical training, leading up to a high standard in the less specialised trades, viz.: manual training, vocational training in garrison classes and vocational training at army vocational training centres".

It will be seen that the first step towards the re-settlement of the man in civil life would be taken in his own unit by a system of manual training, which was considered to be essentially a part of general education. Among the subjects that could be taken during this pre-vocational training were gardening, woodwork, sheet metal work and elementary electrical work. The unit arrangements for classes in vocational training varied according to circumstances. Where the units were fairly isolated, the only instruction that could be given had to be provided in the units themselves. On stations where units were brigaded, however, it was possible to pool tools, apparatus and instructors and arrange courses which could be attended by all available members in the brigade. Similar classes could be arranged on a garrison basis, and, in the main, were attended by soldiers who were reaching the end of their colour service. Where possible, during this period, men were also attached to technical corps for specialist training in the trade which they wished to follow.

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As a natural development of the scheme for vocational training already described, special army vocational training centres were established. Two of these, at Hounslow and Catterick, had been in existence since 1919, but until 1923 they had catered only for men in Eastern and Northern Commands respectively. The experience gained from these centres was now utilised for the benefit of all soldiers who were eligible to attend. All warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men who had enlisted for not less than six years with the Colours, possessed a second-class certificate of education, who had shown aptitude for technical training and who had good military records, were sent to the centres for the last six months of their colour service to take a course in trade training. Each centre accommodated about two hundred students. The subjects taught at the centres varied with the demands of the labour market.

At Catterick, the farms comprised about a hundred and twenty acres of tillage and five hundred acres of grassland, the crops raised in 1922 including seventy acres of wheat, barley and oats, and fifty acres of potatoes, root and green crops. The pig and poultry sections were organised on an equally large scale. By keeping in touch with the various schemes for emigration and land settlement, the centres were able to pass on advice about these matters not only to the students at the courses but also to interested soldiers for whom no vacancies at Catterick were available.⁹

A further note in the *Manual* shows clearly that those responsible for directing the educational scheme were aware of the peculiar difficulties which confronted discharged soldiers on their return to civilian life. Apart from the problem of beginning new trades, many men had been unable to face up to the responsibilities which civilian life forced upon them. It was emphasised, therefore, "that every opportunity should be taken to impress upon the soldier that he will be thrown upon his own resources when his life in the Army, with all its attendant freedom from responsi-

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bility for making provision for himself, comes to an end", and that "return to civil life means not merely re-entry to the labour market, but also re-introduction to the spheres of civic and domestic responsibility. The soldier is relieved of so many of the petty and irritating details of ordinary existence that he is liable to be perplexed and bewildered when faced with these on his discharge. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that the soldier should be assisted to take the place due to him on discharge in the life of the nation." ⁵ The realisation that the army authorities were not only willing but also keen to help him when he returned to civil life had a pronounced effect upon the man himself and the Army as a whole.

The main features of the educational schemes, which in future was to form the pattern of the permanent organisation, have now been described. Since 1923 there have been no major changes in the organisation and essential structure of the scheme. The modifications which have taken place will be incorporated in the following account, which deals briefly with the way in which the paper scheme outlined in the 1923 *Manual for Educational Training* was translated into practice. With all their orders, instructions and regulations, army administrators set out often with good intentions to publish documents which will cover every possible contingency that can arise in the field. But the human factor cannot be set down on paper, and the actual scheme that may develop may be different in many respects from the one which its sponsors had in mind. It will be instructive, therefore, to consider the way in which this new scheme took shape.

Of the work in units at home little need be said. Where difficulties arose, the enthusiasm of members of the Army Educational Corps was usually sufficient to deal temporarily with the situation until the matter could be put right "by

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reference to higher authority " Using ingenuity, improvisation and resourcefulness, the Corps steadily built up a reputation for itself as an important constituent of military training and became accepted as an integral part of the Army.

The work varied to some extent in quantity and quality from unit to unit, but this could not be otherwise in a service where the individual members were drawn from many sources, had had different kinds of educational experience, and, above all, often worked as extremely isolated members of a Corps whose neighbouring members were but names. In the main, however, sound and steady progress was made, as the figures for the numbers of candidates presenting themselves for the first-class and special certificate examinations in 1926 and 1934 indicate. In 1926, 2374 candidates were examined ; by 1934 this figure had risen to 12,119. By 1934, 18,003 soldiers altogether had passed the first-class examination and 962 the special.¹⁰

It was with units on active service and in various foreign stations that the real problems were encountered and an account of some of these will probably indicate most clearly what education in even an Army at peace can mean.

After the Afghan War of 1919, the North-West Frontier of India remained in a state of unrest, and in 1921 the 1st Battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers was despatched there on out-post duty. The educational instructor attached to the battalion was Serjeant-Instructor A. Coleman, and from his report of 1921-3 we get some details of the educational work carried out.¹¹ Under a subaltern, who acted as unit education officer, Coleman was responsible for organising classes where instruction was given to men who were preparing for the first-class and special certificates of education, as well as a non-commissioned officers' training class. For the second-class certificate, we are told, a considerable amount of vocational work was undertaken, the selections including such varied pursuits as horticulture, carpentry, type-writing, designing, electric fitting and music.

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During the year more than 150 second- and third-class certificates were obtained.

Among the miscellaneous activities which Coleman carried out was the preparation of a regimental magazine, the organisation of a male voice choir and the supervision of unit games and recreation. In his spare time occasional popular lectures were given. One of these, on astronomy, was given to a group of Gurkhas who were said to possess an astounding practical knowledge of that subject. On the other hand, a lantern-illustrated lecture to the Gurkhas on "Wonders of the Deep" was received with uncompromising expressions of complete disbelief. When one remembers that Waziristan lies at an altitude of some 6500 feet, and suffers from heavy monsoon rains in summer and freezing cold in winter, one cannot but be impressed by the amount and range of educational activity that took place. Nor can one be unmoved by the words of another writer when he said that "those who have served in Waziristan will have no difficulty in appreciating the determination necessary to carry on instruction within rifle-range of a determined enemy".¹¹

Of the Egypt Command, which included Palestine and the Sudan, it was proudly written that it was the first station of the British Army outside Aldershot where, despite the fact that climatic conditions were adverse for at least four months of the year, "practically every phase of the activities provided for in *Educational Training*, 1923, is in full swing". The more formal education was "going well", and vocational training was being taken by Royal Army Service and Ordnance Corps instructors in various trades. "The interesting experiment is being tried of attaching men to local English firms for instruction in such trades as boot-making, factory tailoring and the repair of athletic goods of all kinds."¹² In the command there were seventeen garrison children's schools, two of which were under the direction of Army Educational Corps warrant officers, the remainder

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being conducted entirely by army schoolmistresses.

A year after this note was written another army educationist in Egypt wrote as follows :

The training season is upon us with all the difficulties which combine to upset the continuity of our branch of training and to interfere with that regularity of attendance at class which is so essential to progress. [In plaintive words the correspondent went on to enquire whether] others at home sometimes realise the conditions in which we labour in some of the stations abroad. Helmhieh Camp is a case in point. Picture a hut with matted and wired walls ; a floor of virgin desert, a wooden roof — and very old and decayed wood it is ; an extra matting roof (?) to hold back some of the continual never-to-be-escaped sun's heat ; an indoor temperature of 100° ; a *khamisin* blowing, filling our eyes, ears, mouth, nose and covering our books, paper, everything with sand ; and Trooper Johnny Ludlow wondering how many places to move the decimal point as he waves both arms about to move 20 or 30 flies that are interested in the sweat pouring down his dusty face.¹²

In Sierra Leone, too, the way of the educationist was not easy .

Educational work presents certain difficulties which are unusual. Chief among these is " Coast Memory ". Everyone, the instructor included, falls a victim to it. A word or a statement which has just been read, heard or said, is entirely lost a few minutes later. One gets held up for the most common-place word, and, try as one may, it cannot be recalled to mind at the time. Another difficulty is caused by climatic conditions. During the rains — June to November — and just before and after that season, terrific storms, locally known as " bullums ", break out. While one of these is raging, oral work is practically impossible. Nothing less than a shout would carry against the roar of wind, rain and thunder ; the enervating damp heat reduces the power of concentration to a minimum, despite the best of resolutions to work hard for that " First ".¹³

Many other descriptions could be given of the way army education grew and overcame the difficulties that were

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constantly presenting themselves in foreign stations. The quality of the work varied greatly, often depending for its success or failure only on the ability and enthusiasm of the Army Educational Corps instructor. But when one is reminded of the conditions under which education was being carried out, one is surprised most of all by the fact that anything was being done at all. In that spirit it is possible to overlook many of the omissions and inconsistencies, these were more than counterbalanced by the amount of really good work that was being done. To conclude this account of army education overseas during the 1920's, we will turn to India, where the majority of British troops on foreign service were stationed.

During the First World War, the various educational activities which sprang up in England and France were not accompanied by similar developments in India, although, prior to the War, formal instruction in general subjects was carried out by members of the Corps of Army Schoolmasters. After the War, however, when the permanent organisation for educational training in the Regular Army was being prepared, it became obvious that, for the sake of continuity, this scheme would have to be closely linked with a corresponding scheme for British troops in India. With the announcement of August 5, 1919, accepting the principle that henceforth educational training would be regarded as an integral part of military training, there came also a declaration stating that the scheme would apply to British troops in India. On March 31, 1920, a general order was issued from Army Headquarters, India, declaring that

The objects of educational training in both the British and Indian Armies are identical; *i.e.* firstly, the increase of military efficiency, and, secondly, the preparation of the soldier for return to civil life as an efficient citizen; but the factors conditioning the problem of how best to conduct this training in British and Indian units respectively, differ widely. Uniformity of system and of standards is, however, essential in each Army.

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When the *Manual for Educational Training* was published in 1923, no special reference to India was made because it was implicitly assumed that educational training would apply to British troops wherever they might be found. Another responsibility of the Indian regimental officer was that, besides supervising the educational training of British troops in India, he was made responsible for the educational training of Indian units. A correspondent in India described the educational policy as being

to make educational training as practical as possible. We set out to dissociate education as far as possible from all the old ideas connected with books, desks, black-boards, etc., and to get 3rd and 2nd Class Certificate candidates, especially the latter, out in the open air, working out problems on the ground. It is becoming a very rare thing now in India to find any hostility to education as carried out on those lines. The central system of education is being adopted as laid down in A.C.I. 399 of 1924.¹³

Details of the working of the educational scheme in India have already been set out (see p 80). This account gave a picture of the difficulties that confronted an Army Educational Corps instructor. The officers, too, had their problems. On arrival in India, every Army Educational Corps officer was first required to do a tour of duty as a command, district or area education officer. Majors were normally appointed to commands, captains to first-class districts, and subalterns to second-class districts, brigade areas or brigades. The troops were scattered over very wide areas, and it was extremely difficult to maintain close supervision of the educational training in units. "In several districts the time taken to travel between units in the same district may be greater than that taken from Land's End to Edinburgh, and in the same brigade area troops may be separated by as much as 400 miles"¹⁴ An extract from the *Journal of the Army Educational Corps*¹⁵ indicates the tremendous distances which Army Educational Corps instructors had to cover in their duties :

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As a museum-piece of educational training, the classes of the 1st Battalion, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, deserve mention ; they are scattered between Battalion Headquarters at Dinapore, and Company headquarters at Muzzaffapore, Lebong and the Andaman Islands, distant respectively, from Dinapore, 60, 500, and 600 miles. Warrant Officer F. W. Middleditch, the educational instructor to this battalion, is our choice for long-distance running events in the next Army Championships.

Apart from British troops, the Army Educational Corps officers had to supervise the educational training of Indian other ranks who outnumbered the British by three to one. Among the additional duties of the Army Educational Corps officer, therefore, was the learning of Urdu, the lingua franca of the Indian Army. His problems were not made easier by the fact that only 10 per cent of the Indians who enlisted could write their mother tongue or any other language.

Apart from the language difficulties and the enervating effects of a hot climate, the details and progress of the educational scheme in India were much the same as those already discussed for troops in Britain, including the provision of vocational training, which was first begun in India on a permanent basis in 1928. No further description of the Indian work is thus required here. Indeed, this brief account of the work carried out in India can be most suitably concluded by reference to the 1930 report of the Indian Statutory Commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon (now Lord Simon). In speaking of educational attainments throughout the country as a whole, the commissioners stated that

The conclusion obviously is that illiteracy prevails among adults to a most unsatisfactory degree, and that, unless a child has learned to write in early years, it is unlikely that it will become literate in later life. Indeed, the movement for adult education in India — apart from University Courses — has, with one striking and valuable exception, hardly begun. We refer to the work done by the Army for education in India. . . . The Indian officer and N.C.O. student have each undergone a full year's

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training as an education instructor.—By this means educational courses are given to the whole personnel of the Indian Army, and many thousands of men return to village life literate and instructed in many matters, from map-reading to the duties of citizenship.

It will be seen that the contribution of the Army to the solution of the Indian problem did not end with the military training of the Indian soldier.

As we have seen, the story of army education during the 1920's was one of steady growth and expansion. There were set-backs, of course, and one of the enemies which had continually to be fought by officers and other ranks of the Army Educational Corps was the soul-destroying monotony of the work, as the following comment only too clearly shows. "The chief drawback to educational training in a *Dépôt*, from an instructor's point of view, is the extreme monotony of the work. Week by week and month by month we go over the same ground, as squads come and go. Unfortunately, there is no way of avoiding this repetition."¹⁶ This remark was echoed in the hearts of many other instructors; the monotony could only be fought against by using periods that had constantly to be repeated as a means of improving the methods of passing on the information. This process of refining the technique of instruction was frequently abetted by invoking the aid of the very powerful force of self-criticism. Yet despite all the criticisms that could be made of the instructor and the instruction, of the hide-bound rules and regulations which stifled initiative and enthusiasm, education in the Army had done something for the soldier which had raised him above the level of the maltreated clod of a hundred years previously. Mr. H. G. Wells, for example, who was not renowned for his habit of paying ill-earned compliments, has told us that "The *persona* of the professional soldier is a blend of the nomadic with an increasing element of the educated *persona*; he is not only a self-respecting fighting man, but now also he is a specially disciplined and devoted, educated and educating man."¹⁷

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Nor should one overlook the contribution which army education was making to the life of the nation as a whole :

It must not be forgotten how much a sound system of mental and moral training, while he is in the Army, enhances the prospects of the soldier's employment on his return to civil life, while an annual contribution of thirty thousand men from the Army who have benefited by from three to seven years' adult education cannot but have a beneficial effect, even though on a small scale, on the life of the nation.¹⁸

After the launching of the *Manual for Educational Training (Provisional)* in 1923, the next big step was the issue of the revised *Manual* in 1931. During the intervening period certain modifications of the original scheme were made. Up to 1924, for example, all soldiers had to continue educational training as far as their abilities allowed. In that year, however, it was announced that such training need not be continued beyond the stage at which the army second-class certificate was obtained.¹⁹ The lack of compulsion to enforce educational training beyond this stage proved a serious hindrance to the progress of the scheme ; the instruction may not have been issued at all if the War Office committee which had been formed to consider the " State of Education in the Army " had included one person who could reasonably have been expected to know something about education. A sad comment on the work of this committee is that, of the witnesses called, all were regimental officers with the exception of one who belonged to the Army Educational Corps

Midway through 1931 an order was issued which more clearly defined the operational role of members of the Army Educational Corps in war. Until this time the personnel for carrying out cipher duties, under the aegis of the general staff, had been drawn from the Royal Corps of Signals. Henceforth these personnel were to be members of the Army Educational Corps, although the general staff still remained in charge of the work

Later, in August 1931, came the issue of the new *Manual*.²⁰

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Educational training had now become accepted as a normal part of military training. Presumably, the men in charge of army education had realised that those people who are constantly on the defensive about a particular project and who are continually proclaiming the need for it long after the objective has been attained, are themselves betraying a little uncertainty about the direction of their future policy. In the 1931 *Manual* we find less emphasis placed on the need for educational training and more on the methods and organisation by which this training could be improved.

The following are some of the ways in which the 1931 *Manual* differed from that of 1923; these are in addition to the innovations which took place between 1923 and 1931 and which have already been described. On the methods of instruction a step forward was taken by the insistence, in the 1931 edition, on the usefulness of self-instruction, that is, private study, for the more advanced students. This was meant to supplement the more direct instruction by an Army Educational Corps or unit instructor. Provision was also made for enlisted boys who "will attend regularly for educational training until they attain the age of 18 years, or until they have passed the examination of the Army 1st Class Certificate of Education. When possible, they will attend central classes to be instructed by personnel of the A.E.C." ²⁰

It was also decided that "soon after joining the Army, every recruit will attend school for examination to ascertain his educational classification". These gradings were made so that the recruit might be directed into the particular educational classes which would be most suitable for him. In the *Manual*, too, are found the conditions governing the entrance to the apprentice tradesmen schools for boys which had been set up. There were two army schools, one at Gosport and one at Chepstow, while special corps schools were established at Hilsea, Bramley, Bovington, Catterick, Chatham and Woolwich. "Each of these schools is organised for the

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training of boys in some special craft with a view to their subsequently becoming skilled Army tradesmen." Entrance was by competitive examination and open to boys between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. The general education of the boys was entrusted to Army Educational Corps personnel. The Military College of Science was a similar school and aimed at providing a general and technical education for apprentice artificers. Royal Artillery boys attended the school during the first three years of their service and followed a course of study in machine drawing, mathematics, mechanics, heat and light, magnetism and electricity, elementary metallurgy and English.

If the period between 1923 and 1931 can be described as one of gradual growth and expansion of the army educational service, the one which followed and came to an abrupt end in September 1939 might be described as one of consolidation. The work developed steadily despite the disadvantages of the immensity and almost unavoidable lack of flexibility in the scheme. New modifications were introduced, but these did not affect the general pattern of the scheme as laid down by the 1925 *Manual* and the subsequent amendments of the 1931 *Manual*.

Among the modifications was the setting-up in 1932, at Dehra Dun, in India, of an Indian Military Academy corresponding to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst. Thus began the attempt to create a recognised combatant force on a purely Indian basis. Like the Royal Military College, a considerable part of the syllabus was devoted to educational training and Army Educational Corps officers were posted to the Academy for this duty.

Another development in India in the early 'thirties was the formation of King George's Royal Indian Military Schools. In 1933 two of these schools were functioning, one at Jhelum and one at Jullundur. The schools were originally intended "to provide institutions in which the officers and men of the Regular Indian Army might find a

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means of obtaining for their sons, at a cost which was within their limited means, the type of education which would enable a boy to find a suitable career in his father's regiment or corps". Boys were admitted at the age of twelve, and preference was given to those whose parents had been killed or suffered afterwards from injuries received in the First World War. While the schools had a military bias, the standard of education corresponded to the Indian special certificate of education. The school at Jhelum catered for Moslems while the one at Jullundur was at first opened for Sikhs and Dagrass, but later Hindus and Garwhals and Kumaons were admitted. Gurkhas were first accepted in September 1933. Army Educational Corps personnel formed part of the teaching staff at these schools.

With the continuance of peace, the problem of making the Army sufficiently attractive to maintain a steady flow of recruits became of crucial importance in a country like Great Britain where the principle of conscription had never been admitted in times of peace. This, bound up with a genuine desire on the part of the higher authorities to do all in their power for the soldier's welfare, led to further pronouncements about the re-settlement of the discharged soldier in civil life. In 1936, for example, it was emphasised "that soldiers should be brought to realise that during their service with the Colours it is their interest and duty to prepare themselves for re-entry into civilian life".²¹ Moreover, the report went on, "the education of the men in this respect depends to a considerable extent on the initiative of their officers". The officers were ordered to inform the men of the advantages of vocational training, and, to make sure that every soldier on entering his last year of service would take an increasing and serious interest in his re-settlement in civil life, each unit was required to maintain a register for each soldier as soon as he came within twelve months of leaving his unit for transfer to the Army Reserve. The report contained a great deal of information which

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would be of inestimable value to the discharged soldier seeking employment.

Two years later, another handbook was issued giving all the particulars and regulations affecting vocational training in the Army. According to the handbook, "the object of vocational training was to allow men who have completed an engagement of not less than six years with the Colours with a character of not less than Good, and who have not been employed during their service at a trade which has a counterpart in civil life, and for whom no suitable permanent government or civil employment is available, to learn suitable trades to fit themselves for employment in civil life".²² The vocational training centres were conducted by the Ministry of Labour and provided some forty different courses, ranging from electric welding to glass-tube bending and dry-walling. Altogether, 4085 men passed through the centres every six months.

So the story of education in the peace-time Army unfolded. The work may not have been spectacular and many educational instructors felt that their small individual efforts in remote parts of the world were adding little to the sum-total of human knowledge and wisdom. Yet the cumulative effects were considerable. From its humble origins in the early regimental schools, educational training had won for itself an established place in the training of peace-time recruits.

In September 1938 came the Munich crisis. The tension that existed throughout Europe was present in the British Army to an even more marked extent; to it would fall the responsibility of fighting the first battles. War was averted, however, and after a short interruption, educational training was resumed. But the lull was temporary, and shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, educational training was once more relegated to a minor position in order that soldiers could take up their action positions. For most of the Army Educational Corps this

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meant work on cipher and similar duties ; but some went into other arms of the Service and others remained at their former posts, vainly hoping that soon educational activities would be resumed. In some overseas stations educational training went on as before ; but, in general, by September 3, 1939, education in the British Army had given way to sterner and more pressing duties.

This interruption of education was a blow to the majority of army educationists. It was also a salutary reminder that they were not only educationists but also soldiers. They were able to face their new and onerous responsibilities with full knowledge that their labours and those of their predecessors over the last 150 years had greatly contributed to the fighting efficiency of an Army that had never known defeat.

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PART TWO
SECOND WORLD WAR

Chapter Five

Rebirth of Army Education

WHEN and where education began in the Army after the outbreak of the Second World War in September 1939 it would be impossible to say. A few months before, the conscription of militiamen had led to a vociferous demand for educational opportunities for the young men who had been called to do compulsory military training for the stated period of six months. The spearheads in the demand were the Workers' Educational Association, the Young Men's Christian Association and the universities. After consultation with the Board of Education, these organisations suggested to the War Office that it would be wrong to take young men away from civilian life without providing them with some kind of facilities to continue any educational interests they might possess.

The War Office responded to the suggestion, and, to meet the potential demand for lecturers, the universities enlarged their extra-mural boards by increasing the membership of the various voluntary organisations concerned with adult education; these strengthened extra-mural boards then began to lay their plans for their active participation in the scheme. By September 1939, the preliminary arrangements had been completed and the schemes were ready for operation. When war came, the *ad hoc* committees were dispersed and the official schemes were abandoned.

But the abandonment of official schemes does not mean the end of education. The Army was composed of a cross-section of the entire British population. Some soldiers had been students of one kind or another; many of them were

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determined that, in preparing for war, they would not forget the peace. Other soldiers were men with hobbies and interests which they were not prepared to give up without a struggle. When groups of individuals found that they had common interests, it was not long before some kind of educational activities began to emerge.

At first these activities were widely scattered and loosely organised, but, gradually, they took shape. In Western Command, for example, the troops in the vicinity of Liverpool were able to call for help from the University through the good grace of the Vice-Chancellor, who had been one of the supporters of the educational scheme for militiamen. Similar help was given by the University of Oxford to men stationed in and around the city. In London, lectures were at first arranged under the auspices of the Y.M.C.A. Although only a few cases have been mentioned, throughout the length and breadth of this country educational courses of various kinds developed during this period of the so-called "phoney" war. These were the seeds of a movement that was later to rise to considerable heights.

By late 1939, however, it had become clear, both inside the Army and out, that some form of educational organisation was needed to co-ordinate all the diverse educational activities which were being carried out by the initiative and enthusiasm of small groups in scattered places. Because of King's Regulations, educationists inside the Army could do little to make their demands felt. But the cry was taken up by civilian educationists, and articles and letters began to appear in the educational journals, insisting that the needs of the mind should not be neglected simply because many men and women had changed their civilian suits and costumes for battle-dress. The voluntary bodies that were interested in adult education repeatedly and firmly insisted that something should be organised on an official basis.

Accordingly, the Y.M.C.A. Education Committee invited the secretaries of the W.E.A. and the Universities Extra-

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mural Consultative Committee to confer ; the outcome was an informal discussion between representatives of the three Services, the Board of Education and the civilian bodies which had been interested in the scheme for militiamen. A widely representative conference was convened, and it was decided that a Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces should be formed. Later, members were nominated by the universities, local education authorities and the voluntary organisations for adult education, the three Services appointing observer members. The first meeting of the Central Advisory Council took place on January 25, 1940, Sir Walter Moberly (chairman of the University Grants Committee) and Dr. A. D. (now Lord) Lindsay (Master of Balliol College, Oxford) being appointed chairman and vice-chairman respectively, with Dr Basil Yeaxlee (reader in educational psychology in the University of Oxford) as secretary.

As their practical contribution to providing lectures and classes for the troops, the Central Advisory Council invited the vice-chancellors of universities and the principals of university colleges to call representative conferences in their extra-mural areas to form committees through which the Central Advisory Council might work. These conferences were called and led to the formation of regional committees of the Central Advisory Council at each university or university college—numbering twenty-three in all. The regional committees had much the same representation as the Central Advisory Council with a full-time secretary usually drawn from the university staff ; their work will be described in later pages.

In this way the civilian resources of the country were mobilised and co-ordinated so that they might be placed at the disposal of the Services. As in the First World War, the Y.M.C.A. generously found accommodation and funds to start the new organisation ; these funds were supplemented by the Pilgrim Trust.

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Since, at the outbreak of war, the Army (and Air Force) education officers had been transferred to other duties, the regional committees found that when they tried to begin their work, their tasks were peculiarly difficult because they had no ready means of liaison with the various Services. It soon became obvious that action in "high places" would have to be taken, and members of the Central Advisory Council made repeated overtures to the War Office that the Army should again develop its educational resources.

Partly owing to the pressure exerted by civilians, and partly because the War Office already realised the extreme importance of education as a means of maintaining the morale of the troops, the Secretary of State for War appointed a small committee, under the chairmanship of Lieut.-General Sir Robert Haining, in March 1940. The duty of the committee was "to draw up a scheme of further education for the Army in war-time, in subjects other than military, and also to consider the provision required for the welfare and recreational needs of the Army".¹

The report of the committee stated that "there is no need to argue the case for education in the Army in war-time; the demand has already made itself felt". Besides stressing the value of education in the maintenance of morale, the committee also emphasised the importance of keeping minds alert, "if the individual initiative and intelligence which are an essential part of the equipment of every soldier today, are to be maintained", and if they were to avoid the attitude of mind of the man who said that what he liked about the last war was that you "could cloakroom your brain for duration".

It was realised at the outset of the army scheme that the provision of educational facilities should be a matter of natural growth and not of artificial forcing. Whatever was done had to be not only on a voluntary basis — how the ogre of 'compulsion' was afterwards introduced will be described in later pages — but also related to genuine demands from

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the men. But without an organisation inside the Army through which these demands could be expressed, there could be little hope of any real expansion of education. It was agreed, therefore, that a small Directorate for Army Education should be established, the first director being Mr. F. W. D. Bendall, who was seconded from the Board of Education. Mr. Bendall retained his civilian status, and, with a small directing staff, was soon installed at the War Office. To ensure that policy would be developed within the framework of army organisation, the director was provided with a military assistant.

The former members of the Army Educational Corps were now returned to educational duties (see p. 92), and to meet the inevitable demands that would confront the recently formed organisation, new members of the Corps were recruited from individuals who had joined the Army in war-time.* It was decided that "specialist staff [Army Educational Corps personnel] will be provided as necessary for Commands, Areas or Divisions, whose responsibility it will be to keep in touch with formations and to establish the necessary liaison with the Regional Committees and the local education authorities in their areas"² Within three years the Army Educational Corps had expanded to three times its original size.

Man-power difficulties made it impossible to authorise the appointment of full-time education officers in the units, but it was laid down that "a suitable officer should be chosen who will be responsible, in addition to his normal company or equivalent duties, for looking after the 'educational

* From time to time various correspondents to educational journals suggested that members of the Army Educational Corps were engaged on other duties besides those of adult education, among these "other duties" being psychological testing and other work of a routine nature. One of the present writers (T. H. H.) was actively connected with the Army Education Scheme from September 1941, and on no occasion met with or heard of any member of the Army Educational Corps who was not wholly employed on duties connected with adult education in the Army.

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interests ' of the unit . . . it will be his business to discover what the men may want, to advise them of the facilities that may be available, and to see that their requirements are brought to the attention of those responsible for the supervision of educational provision ". By using regimental officers as part-time unit education officers, the Army Council not only ensured saving in man-power but also delivered a shrewd blow at the critics who were protesting that the whole scheme was an imposition by a political hierarchy at the War Office. The clear, prescribed duties of full-time and part-time education officers were to ascertain the needs of the men, and to do all in their power to meet them.

From previous experience, it was anticipated that the demands would fall into three main groups. First, there would be enquiries for single talks or lectures, with opportunities for discussion, on a wide variety of subjects, especially those relating to events of current importance ; where conditions made it possible, these talks might be extended to short courses of four to six meetings. It was hoped that the talks would be sought not only by men who had been connected with or interested in adult education in civil life, but also by many others who might have been stimulated to new thought by their novel conditions and fresh contacts. It was also believed that the men who did not know what to do with their unoccupied hours might be attracted as sheer relief from boredom. Apart from the provision of books and other reading matter, these talks and lectures seemed likely to be the main and most effective educational activity for the Army as a whole.

Secondly, since many men had been called up who had previously entered, or had proposed to enter, on a course of study for a degree or for some professional or technical or commercial qualification, it was realised that some more definite teaching or instruction would be required. Although this demand was likely to be limited, it was considered

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essential that satisfactory provision should be made for it. Associated with this group were those who, although without a specific objective, were more interested in the 'utilities' than in the wider 'humanities', and would require instruction in some subject which they thought would be useful to them, such as elementary science, commercial subjects or a language.

Lastly, there were those to be considered who found mental relaxation in hobbies and crafts, although "to cater for them", the committee reported, "will often present almost insuperable difficulties". On the other hand, it was thought that music and, to a lesser degree, dramatics could be readily developed.

With these anticipated demands clearly stated, the means of satisfying them were then enumerated. Rightly, the Army's own educational resources were the first to be examined. It was well known that many officers and men would be able to take some part in giving informal talks and lectures, and in more specific instruction, without interference with their military requirements. These men would include not only those who had been teachers or lecturers in civilian life, but also many others who possessed the necessary equipment and gifts, and who only needed some encouragement and guidance to play their parts as instructors. The advantage to the scheme of instructors who lived — and moved — with the troops, needs no comment.

But even if the Army made full use of all its resources, which was far from likely, it could not be expected to be self-sufficient. Help would have to be obtained on a generous scale from external sources. Naturally, the Army turned to those agencies interested in the promotion of adult education, including the universities, the local education authorities and the voluntary organisations. The liaison which the Central Advisory Council had been seeking was thus officially recognised.

The question of providing for men who wanted vocational

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education presented greater problems. Where men were likely to remain in the same locality for a period of some months and were within reach of a technical school or institute, use could be made of the facilities provided by the local education authorities. In most cases these were offered free of charge to the Services. But in certain circumstances it would be more desirable to arrange classes specially for the troops, either in the premises owned by the local education authorities or elsewhere. Where arrangements of this sort were made, authority was given to make the appropriate payments.

Unfortunately, most men did not know how long they were likely to be stationed in any one place, and many units were not within easy reach of technical institutions. For the more earnest students, therefore, 'correspondence courses' were suggested so that they might pursue their studies for professional or technical qualifications. The negotiations with the organisations mainly responsible for the provision of correspondence courses had not been completed by the time the report was presented. While it was contemplated that no charge should be made to men who attended lectures and classes, it was agreed that a small fee should be charged for correspondence courses to distinguish between the genuine student and the light-hearted individual who is "prepared to have a go at anything once".

In these several ways the means of tackling the specific demands that were likely to arise were indicated. Much attention, too, was given to the problem of providing an adequate supply of books for educational, as distinct from purely recreational, purposes. Text-books would be needed for those pursuing a definite course of study, and books for lighter moments would be required by an audience far bigger than the one which would be interested in lectures and classes. From the beginning of hostilities, the civilian authorities had made appeals throughout the country for books for the Forces, and, in 1940, the Lord Mayor of

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London, working in close co-operation with the Library Association, had opened a fund for this purpose. The City of London Territorial Army and Air Force Association Depot at Finsbury Barracks was used as the main distribution centre. The aim of this scheme was to set up libraries wherever large numbers of soldiers were gathered together, and to equip library vans to serve scattered units. Ultimately, it was hoped to have a properly equipped library and reading-room in every large camp and a small collection of books, which would be frequently changed and renewed, for every small group.

Yet it was recognised that the main help was likely to come from public libraries, the librarians having already promised to give every possible assistance. Further, where necessary, these resources would have to be supplemented by the Army itself. It was also suggested that wireless programmes might be used and listening groups formed to follow and discuss the series of talks designed for this purpose by the B.B.C. The limited number of wireless sets available, however, and the unrivalled appeal of the entertainments programmes, led the Committee to suppose that not much strictly educational work would be done in this way.

To the educationist, the army scheme contained two pitfalls that would need watching. One danger was that the purpose of army education might be interpreted as the provision of lectures in any kind of order and without any sense of continuity. Another potential evil to the 'pure' adult educationist was that some kind of parade pressure might be used to get the men into classes. It will be illuminating, later, to see how far these threatened dangers turned out to be real, and how they were resolved.

Like the civilian bodies, the army authorities had now declared their proposals for promoting the mental well-being of serving soldiers. The scheme was first announced to the Army on September 25, 1940.³ Applications for transfer to

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the Army Educational Corps were invited from officers and other ranks. Those who wished to be considered for commissions had to be honours graduates with experience of teaching or educational administration, while for transfer in the ranks candidates had to be university graduates or 'certificated' teachers. On selection for transfer, candidates were sent to the Army School of Education for short courses; if they came through the course satisfactorily, they were transferred to the Army Educational Corps for the duration of the War.

After the official launching of the scheme, the next development came when the new members of the Army Educational Corps left the Army School of Education to join their units or formations. The officers were usually posted to the headquarters of a formation — command, district, sub-district, corps, division or Allied contingents — and warrant officers and serjeants were generally attached to most formations, the larger hospitals and convalescent depots, detention barracks and military prisons, and other selected units. Their reception was not the same in any two places. In many cases they were greeted by commanding officers who regarded education as 'new-fangled nonsense' for upsetting them in their real job — training men to be soldiers. Others were received with a passive acceptance which, in the long run, was more heart-breaking than the open hostility of the former group. On the other hand, some of the more enlightened commanding officers received the new arrivals with enthusiasm which was often difficult to live up to. Generally, however, they were regarded with a healthy suspicion, and the commanding officers left themselves open to persuasion that there might be something in education which would contribute to military efficiency.

The next few months saw the appointment of unit education officers. Sometimes the responsibility was given to the awkward subaltern as something to keep him busy, while, not infrequently, the post was awarded to a subaltern

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who could be relied upon to do nothing that would add to the already heavy burden of the commanding officer. Nevertheless, on the whole, a degree of discrimination was exercised by commanding officers to pick the right type of man for the difficult role of evangelising and organising education in the unit. In January 1941 one correspondent wrote that "there is, happily, abundant evidence that these crucial selections are being wisely and imaginatively made".³

One of the most difficult problems that had to be faced at the outset of the scheme was the provision of accommodation. It was realised that, unless the right kind of room, properly equipped, agreeably warmed and adequately lighted, were provided, most men in the unit would prefer — and reasonably — to spend their off-duty hours in the canteen or the nearest cinema. It was not easy to forecast how far the 'right kind of room' could be made available; but later evidence showed that those who were responsible for the organisation of the scheme tackled this problem with vigour and a fair measure of success.

There were many other problems — the place of the Auxiliary Territorial Service in the scheme presented peculiar difficulties — but even at this early stage it could be seen that the Army Council had shown considerable zeal to establish the most diverse and liberal educational structure for the troops. The Army Council had learned from the experience of the Great War that many fighting men, however much occupied in their professional duties, still had the time and the inclination to take their minds off the business of fighting without any loss of efficiency; rather was it enhanced. The scheme had got off to a reasonably good start.

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2. Army Council Instruction 1138 of 1940.
3. *J Educ* 10 (January 1941).

Chapter Six

Developments

THE first indication of the progress that was being made with the scheme as a whole came when the report of the Central Advisory Council for the period October 1940–March 1941 was issued. For some time there had been embarrassing questions, some friendly and some not, about what was being done. Many men, and women, in the Forces, who had read flamboyant newspaper articles about a great educational programme, had seen little or nothing of its workings in their units and wondered if anything really were being done. Many civilians were impatient about their inability to obtain accurate news. The first report of the Central Advisory Council was, therefore, greeted with more than ordinary eagerness.

It contained some encouraging facts. For the six months indicated, excluding the work of the local education authorities, about 8689 meetings had been arranged by the various regional committees for the Army. Most of these meetings had been in the form of single lectures on isolated topics, and, as anticipated, this lack of continuity was criticised as one of the main weaknesses of the scheme. Two explanations were offered for this. One was that the exigencies of training operations, and the movements of troops, made it difficult to ensure continuity, while, at this early stage, some officers were afraid of attempting anything too ambitious and favoured the single topical talk, especially with the War as background. An encouraging feature of the report was that about 190 lectures, classes and courses were provided for women alone; to an increasing extent, educational activities

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were being attended by both sexes.

Of the work done by the troops themselves at this period, the following figures, which cover the period March-May 1941, in one command alone (Northern), may be cited. Single lectures by Service men and women amounted to 3207, more than three times the number given by civilian lecturers. The lectures were mainly concerned with some aspect of the War, but there were many others dealing with technical and the more cultural subjects. A fair number of these lectures had been given to members of the Auxiliary Territorial Service, who were beginning to play a bigger part both as teachers and students. Classes had been formed in many of the subjects that were studied by the men, and, in many cases, joint classes for men and women had been arranged. But the interests of women are, on the whole, different from those of men, and of the A.T.S. who took any classes, the majority preferred subjects like dancing, pattern and dress-making, home nursing, embroidery and design, and cooking.

Besides the more formal work that was done by both men and women, a variety of 'informal' activities were arranged. Recreational handicrafts were provided for patients in hospitals and convalescent depots, as well as men on isolated sites as in Anti-Aircraft Command. Here considerable help was given by the voluntary organisations like the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., the Women's Institutes and the Rural Community Councils. Some regional committees helped to promote exhibitions of pictures and drawings by members of the Forces, and also supplied guides to the successful art exhibitions organised by the British Institute of Adult Education.

There seemed little in the way of educational activity that was not attempted somewhere or other. In one area a university tutor of languages was teaching individual men, who wished to learn Turkish, at several widely scattered sites. A type-script grammar was written for them, and later

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the lecturer prepared gramophone records to help the men with pronunciation. Several of the regional committees arranged for unit-tutors to make weekly visits to groups of men not only for informal discussion but also for giving guidance in reading and cultural activities generally. A considerable number of these unit-tutors were drawn from the members of the Workers' Educational Association. Among the other informal activities that were carried out were discussions, debates, brains trusts, mock trials, play-reading and music circles, as well as visits to places of educational interest.

The activities already described were undertaken partly by civilians and partly by Service men and women. Close co-operation between the civilian and army authorities had been achieved. This was carried to a further stage by the development of educational facilities for men of the Dominions and Allied Forces ; one regional committee had no fewer than 715 voluntary teachers conducting classes in English for Poles.

Throughout the summer of 1941, work of the sort already outlined was carried on. Since the whole scheme was on a voluntary basis, it was to be expected that the total number of classes and lectures would decline during the more favourable weather. This did occur. Still, the evidence which came from commands showed that the demand was not only real but was also keen. Hard work was being done to meet the demands, not always with unsuccessful results. What was being done had become known to many people, and several distinguished men and women came forward to offer their services as lecturers to the troops. In Northern Command, for example, Miss Phyllis Bentley, Mr. J. B. Priestley and Miss Naomi Jacob made extensive tours to lecture to appreciative and critical audiences.

Of the lectures, international affairs continued to have the widest appeal, while talks on personal travel experiences came next in order of popularity. The correspondence

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courses that were issued were taken up with avidity by the more serious students, and, by the end of August, 235 members had enrolled in Northern Command alone. The demands for music were such that the only limitation lay in the lack of equipment. Many groups were formed to extend the appreciation of music, while music-making was developed as far as the lack of instruments would permit. Where instruments were in short supply, vocal music was encouraged. It was not surprising to find one Welsh unit producing a poster bearing these words : " The War hasn't stopped the birds singing : Why should it you ? JOIN OUR CHOIR ! "

It may now be seen that, one year after its official birth, the scheme had grown into a rugged infant. To make sure that the child would progress favourably, it was natural that the ' physicians ' should be called in to make a thorough overhaul. The diagnosis came in the form of a series of articles which were published in *The Times Educational Supplement* at the end of 1941 ; the whole scheme, and the progress made, was now exposed to the critical examination of public opinion. The articles were contributed by seven individuals, two soldiers and five civilians, who had been intimately connected with the scheme since its inception. An analysis of their contents will do much to give an accurate record of the scheme as seen by those whose duty it was to operate it.

The first article was written by the Director of Army Education, Mr. F. W. D. Bendall. He suggested that the experience of the past year had shown that there was a persistent demand for education, but that it was only strong in so far as the process could be linked up with the future prospects of those demanding it. Technical and professional instruction was asked for by a small number, and so was academic instruction. The most illuminating point put forward by the Director, however, dealt with the difference between the attitude of the soldier and the civilian towards education in the Army. Knowing how limited were the

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possibilities, the soldier was inclined to think that something more comprehensive and less selective was needed. "He tends to measure success by the percentage of men covered by the scheme, and to discount the processes by which unorganised education in a thousand ways meets the un-instructed needs of many individuals." The civilian, despite a nodding acquaintance with the limitations imposed by the War itself and by army organisation, was more concerned with the value of the influence given, and realised that this must inevitably limit the numbers influenced. At the same time, he knew that slowly the influence would spread.

Broadly speaking, the issue was one of quantity versus quality ; it has been an issue which has continually confronted and confounded those who have been charged with operating the army education scheme, and needs closer examination "Quantity", wrote Mr. Bendall, "calls for more time and more teachers." A million men would have meant thirty thousand teachers. Every soldier had spare hours but not always at the same time. It was only the commanding officer who could arrange that duties would not prevent a soldier from attending a class ; it was the Army itself that would have to provide the new teachers. Improvement in quality could be secured by a variety of means, such as more training of teachers, more equipment, a wide choice of subjects and more continuity. Some of these means were possible, and in most of them the help or inspiration of experienced persons, either civilians or experts who had joined the Army Educational Corps, was of the greatest value.

What of the man himself — in whose interests army education had been introduced ? It was realised that, in spite of everything being done for him, much would depend on his own interests and efforts , and this was of considerable importance, for the army scheme was the only educational influence working on the younger adult male population. Its potentialities were enormous and would

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be much enhanced at the end of the War.

In the second article in *The Times Educational Supplement* series, which was contributed by Lord Eustace Percy, rector of the Newcastle Division of the University of Durham, the help given by the universities to regional committees was described. Much of its content has been portrayed in preceding pages ; but it contained one point which indicated the intricacy of trying to weld civilian resources on to the rigid framework of military organisation. "The British Army today", he said, "is the most intelligent the world has ever seen." This meant two things. First, the man in the ranks could be taught, as never before, to fight with his head, and, secondly, in waiting, his patience needed to be sustained as never before by intellectual interests. The civilian lecturer was able to help in meeting this second need, but it was outside his province even to try to do anything about the first. And there, unfortunately, was a snare which was not always avoided by civilian lecturers and which led to a certain amount of ill-feeling between the civilian and Service authorities. This was all the more distressing because there was a common goal.

The help given by local education authorities to the regional committees was discussed in the third article, which was contributed by Dr. H. W. Howes, principal of Norwich City College and Art School. Local education authorities, wrote Dr. Howes, had made a fine response to the army scheme and most of them had offered free admission to classes for all members of H.M. Forces. Dr. Howes also described how, in rural areas, schools were prepared for the establishment of evening classes for soldiers ; teachers were also provided. The value of this service to the Army cannot be over-estimated. Many of the men stationed in isolated rural districts had come from highly populated places, and boredom in the evenings was a real menace.

The technical colleges, too, were playing their part. Apart from the magnificent work they were doing in provid-

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ing intensive courses in technical subjects for the training of army tradesmen, they had made a considerable contribution to the educational scheme itself. At first there was much confusion in that many soldiers, who had been encouraged to attend classes in technical institutions, enrolled long after the classes had started, with the result that they were always lagging behind those who had begun the course of study at the right time. With the appointment of education officers, this situation became easier, although it was never wholly rectified. The attendance at classes was limited at first by transport difficulties ; but this was gradually improved. Of the teaching in technical institutions there can be little doubt that it was measurably improved by the advent of soldier-students, for teachers made every effort to ' hold ' their new students. The latter stayed with them if they were not dull or patronisingly academic

One can get an idea of the choice of subjects from the enrolments at one technical college, which was situated in a small provincial city. Altogether, some six hundred Army and A.T.S. students enrolled in the session 1941-2. Of these sixty-five took art ; forty-six, building ; a hundred and ninety-one, languages ; seventy-nine, commerce ; sixteen, domestic science ; forty-seven, science ; seven, printing ; three, boot and shoe manufacture ; and a hundred and sixty-three, engineering. This figure would have been much higher if the accommodation had been available. The contact with civilian life was undoubtedly one of the great attractions of the technical college, although the love of learning for its own sake was not infrequently a reason for regular attendance.

The article contributed by Colonel A. C. T. White, of the Army Educational Corps, was concerned with the possibilities within the unit itself. The key to this question was found in one sentence : " If a unit educational scheme is to survive the exigencies of the Service, it must be flexible, opportunist, and freed from dependence on equip-

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ment". He insisted on the need for unit education committees if the scheme were to be conducted in the right atmosphere; the committee had to be representative of all types, professions and ranks. Its first aim would be to disclose the needs of the less vocal men, and to publicise in an arresting way the facilities that had been arranged. Anyone familiar with the Army or adult education would know that this could not be overdone.

According to Colonel White, finding unit speakers was not difficult, if the talks were based on personal experiences. One unit had a list of forty-two lectures, of which the following is a fair selection: "Telephone Operating", "The Battle of Crete", "In a Boot Factory", "A Year in Cologne", "Plate-laying" and "How your Rates are Fixed". As speakers gained a reputation, it was possible to build up an exchange list for circulation to other units. The scope then became much wider, as is seen from a few consecutive entries in a garrison list: "Air Warfare", "Film Production", "Local Geology", "The Faroe Islands", "The Training of Chorus", "Criminal Law" and "German Universities".

Another activity which achieved great popularity was the unit 'brains trust'. Frequently this had graduated from the widely developed general knowledge and spelling 'bees', and became institutions where questions were considered with more seriousness, if less dexterity, than the original B B C venture. One such team was composed of a science teacher, a language teacher, an ex-serjeant-major, a political biographer and a company director, whose military ranks were major, three captains and two lance-corporals respectively.

The importance of the discussion group was rightly emphasised. Many people felt that one of the first educational tasks of any unit was to stabilise a permanent discussion group of the more interested members. When units were moved, this would be the last activity to be given up, and the

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first to be resumed in new billets or on the troopship. In these established discussion groups, intellectual activity was of the highest; the head of a family, the employer, the employed, the taxpayer and others were able to synthesise and integrate their experience of life. In Colonel White's arresting words, "It is no small privilege to listen to talk between men who have grown tea on the Himalayan foothills, shipped it on the Hooghly, warehoused it in the Port of London, priced it in Mincing Lane and sold it over the counter". So far as possible, the discussion group made use of broadcast programmes; but much of the matter addressed to troops was so bleached by security commitments that it scarcely offered a basis for discussion.

Since training areas were frequently sited as far as possible from towns, it often happened that classes within units conducted by the troops themselves outnumbered those organised through the regional committees. Commercial subjects and modern languages were in greatest demand, while there was a heavy demand for subjects that bore directly on military training, including map-reading, mathematics, electricity and the internal-combustion engine. Nature-study and 'star lore' were in demand on isolated sites, while the numerous calls for 'popular science' were seldom met because of the shortage of competent instructors. Literature classes were disappointing, probably because the approach was too academic, but play-reading was popular; in some Pioneer Corps units where literacy was low, there were successful imitations of the old 'penny readings'.

History, geography and economics presented as continuous courses of study, were very suitable for units with fixed hours of duty, such as record offices and headquarters staffs, but were less successful in training units, where lectures and demonstrations filled the average day, and, sometimes, the evening too. In such cases, and in the field forces, these subjects were better treated in the discussion groups

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Since the equipment was easily carried and absorption in art proved such refreshment from the strain of training, the art classes that were carried out in units were of a good standard and deserve special commendation. This also applied to music; where an instructor could be found, no matter what method he used — choral society, string quartette, gramophone club or community singing — he usually met with a good response.

At first, teachers were prone to repeat the conditions with which they had been familiar in civilian life, and planned courses of extensive length. It was soon seen that, under Service conditions, it was better to dissect syllabuses and plan short courses of from six to ten weeks, which was as much as most units could foresee.

There was little difficulty about providing books for organised classes; but often the general reading matter needed to fortify work in the discussion group was not only difficult to obtain but also to carry, since the transport of the field force was designed to carry war-like stores only. The best policy seemed to be in giving a collective guarantee to the local librarian, and to organise a bulk issue and exchange. There is little need to say that much of the equipment was improvised. For example, one epidiascope was built from a cocoa tin, a biscuit tin and the lenses of a pair of spectacles from Woolworth's. In barracks, it was often possible to set aside a 'quiet' room for study; but frequently a room in a cottage had to be begged or hired for men on the coast and other isolated places.

At the outset of the war-time scheme, the prevalence of lectures and classes failed to cater for men who are repelled by much speech, and who are said to think best when their hands are active. After a few months there came into being a large number of unit handicraft classes. "They do not compete with the technical side of unit training; but by working with a simple kit of tools on unit scrap — iron from any dump, driftwood from the beaches, withies on sedgemoor

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— the soldier can at least produce a basket for his family or shelving for his hut.”

The foregoing shows that the Army had done much to organise its own resources for education, while the civil authorities had played an important part in helping the scheme along. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Dr A. D (now Lord) Lindsay, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, writing with enthusiasm of the way in which educational opportunities had been seized by the troops. Although there were many places where little had been attempted, the presence of one or two interested individuals in a unit had often led to the development of an educational programme of a wide scope. Further, where close co-operation had been obtained between experienced adult education tutors and unit education officers, the value of the work was greatly enriched. Many of the tutors painted a remarkable and vivid picture of the Army's interest in international affairs, of talks arranged for forty minutes which were followed by extemporary discussions that lasted two hours and more.

Several of these tutors had taken part in the army educational scheme during and after the First World War. They were generally agreed on the striking difference between the Army of 1940 and the Army of 1918. Despite the remarks of the cynics, the remarkable progress of education between the Wars, especially of post-primary education, had borne fruit. “ These men wanted to argue and discuss, and they were being encouraged to do so. There was almost universal testimony that discussion was free, and felt to be free, that men, non-commissioned officers, and officers, discussed together.” Dr. Lindsay went on to say: “ I got the impression that there had not been an Army in England which discussed like this one since that famous Puritan Army which produced the Putney Debates and laid the foundation of modern democracy ”.

The sixth article in this series was contributed by the man to whom the scheme of education in the Second World War

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owes most, namely, General Sir Ronald Adam, adjutant-general to the Forces. A man whose every action manifested his deep concern for the troops, and whose far-sighted policies had done much for their mental and material welfare, it was to be expected that, in his account, he would concern himself not with past progress of the scheme, but with the possible developments. Despite all that had been attempted and achieved under the army education scheme, it was still a salutary thought that, late in 1941, about 80 per cent of the Army was untouched by any direct educational influence. Since these were the men and women who stood most in need, it would appear that appeals for voluntary effort were not enough. Accordingly, in September 1941, the Army Bureau of Current Affairs was introduced by the Army Council, largely, no doubt, owing to the presence on this august body of the Adjutant-General. The details of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs will be discussed in Chapter IX; here it may be stated that its coming marked the first introduction of compulsion into the army educational scheme of this or previous wars.

As the Adjutant-General pointed out, there were arguments for and against compulsion. He had decided in favour of it, and, on three counts, it appeared that further compulsion was not only desirable but also necessary. The first of these related to illiterate recruits, who were to be found among every Army intake. No illiterate could properly be trained for war, and yet the man-power situation was such that the Army had to make the best use of all its material; the Adjutant-General suggested that the Army would have to take in hand the education of illiterates as one of its duties. Secondly, it was felt that of the 80 per cent who were outside the educational scheme, there were many who would take part if their interest could once be secured. It seemed that a degree of compulsion would be sufficient to start a number of soldiers on educational tasks which they would continue to pursue voluntarily. Thirdly, although the victorious end of

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the War seemed very remote, the Adjutant-General suggested that it was necessary to look forward to the demobilisation period when the demands for education would emerge in an intense and sustained form. Compulsory education would then not only be necessary but also indispensable, a certain amount of compulsory work at an early stage would prove not merely a dress rehearsal, but also, to change metaphor, a trial ground where original ideas could be discovered, tested and adopted, if they survived the tests. How these suggestions for an extension of compulsory education worked out will be described later.

The last of this series of important articles was written by the newly appointed Director of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs. He was Mr. W. E. Williams, an outstanding figure in adult education who had already done valuable liaison work between the civilian and Service authorities. In August 1941 a pamphlet called *Current Affairs in the Army* was issued, with the authority of the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, to all commanding officers, describing the setting-up of this new branch of army education. The pamphlet contained a description of the plan whereby all troops were to be given the opportunity, during training time, of discussing the topical issues and problems of the day. The reasons for the introduction of A.B.C.A., the label by which the new feature came to be known, were briefly summarised as threefold:

- (1) The soldier who understands the cause for which he fights is likely to be a more reliable soldier than the one who doesn't.
- (2) Many soldiers have no such understanding, and many others are losing touch with the sources of knowledge and information they used to possess.
- (3) It is the business of the Army to make good this deficiency of knowledge, and, therefore, to devise what means are possible to keep the men abreast of current affairs.

The way A.B.C.A. would work was described as follows. Each week the Army Bureau of Current Affairs would issue

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a bulletin to all regimental officers in the British Army. There would be two types of bulletin, which would appear alternately. One, called *Current Affairs*, would aim to provide a background of knowledge against which current events could be assessed and understood. The other, *War*, would provide military intelligence in the widest sense ; it would print vivid narratives of what was happening in the various theatres of war, and would supplement these accounts with records of outstanding achievements by the Army, Navy and Air Force. On the basis of these bulletins, platoon and company commanders were directed to give at least one talk a week to their men, and to afford full opportunities for questions and discussion. Recognising that a majority of regimental officers had had no training or experience in leading such discussions, the War Office announced that facilities would be afforded, on as large a scale as possible, for training courses in the method of leading discussion groups in current affairs. It announced, also, that various auxiliary methods would be employed to cultivate in all ranks a better knowledge of outstanding current events ; these would include a service of information films, a system of reference libraries and a large programme of photographic exhibitions.

The local agents and collaborators of A.B.C.A. were to be the members of the Army Educational Corps, many of whom had, for some time, been stimulating and organising activities of the kind which A.B.C.A. now sought to develop on a new basis and a more extensive scale. The Army Educational Corps would provide liaison between A.B.C.A. and units, and would give all possible aid to the regimental officers who would be engaged in giving the weekly talks on current affairs.

By December 1941 A.B.C.A. was well established, and although it was too early to make any statistical appraisal of its progress, it was known that current affairs discussions were being held on a wide scale. It seemed reasonable to

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assert that not less than half the units in the British Army were, to the best of their ability, operating the scheme. Already, several thousands of regimental officers had been through short courses of training on the technique of leading discussion groups.

The main criticism of A.B.C.A. was voiced by many professional adult educationists. They were appalled by the thought of discussions on important events being conducted by the crudest amateurs, many of whom had never given a talk in their lives, and many of whom had no more than a nodding acquaintance with the topic under consideration. But early evidence showed that, discreetly aided, and animated by a desire to make the best of their deficiencies, a reasonably high proportion of regimental officers were making a success of their new training role. The bulletins that were issued were drafted to give not only the raw material for talks but also practical guidance in handling the discussion. Observations of A.B.C.A. sessions showed that, although few of the regimental officers had the knowledge, the skill or dexterity of the professional, most of them had certain ruder qualities, which, in part, made up for many of their failings in style and knowledge. Usually, these officers had the good sense to be honest with their men and to confess that they were not experts but rather taking the chair for a communal meeting. That approach seldom failed and gave the men a confidence in their own ability to join in. A further answer to those who criticised the crudeness of A.B.C.A. was that, if current events were going to be discussed in training hours on a platoon basis, there could be no other way of doing it other than by the A.B.C.A. method. The mystical legions of accomplished experts who the professionals wished to draft into full-time service simply did not exist, either inside the Army or out of it.

A further criticism came from those who were opposed to compulsory education, and, who, with Plato in his *Republic*, believed that "knowledge acquired under com-

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pulsion obtains no hold upon the mind". The answer to this was given by the troops themselves. Opportunity to rest from the strenuous exertions of military training for one hour was a degree of compulsion which they would have been glad to extend — in training time. It must not be forgotten that Service men and women were under compulsion the whole time and that the introduction of A.B.C.A. simply meant that the content of one hour would be changed. Experience showed that where the A.B.C.A. period was carried out *in training hours* as decreed by authority, it was received with alacrity; the rub came when it was done after training hours. This happened quite frequently, despite constant pleas and orders from the A.B.C.A. Directorate, and undoubtedly did serve to bring A.B.C.A. into disfavour with the troops and the unfortunate regimental officers who were ordered to run discussions at these unstipulated times.

It must be admitted, however, that the scheme depended to a considerable extent on the enthusiasm (or at the least, interest) of the commanding officer at the 'receiving end'. Though, in most cases, the A.B.C.A. pamphlets were well received and every effort made to use them as bases for sensible and profitable discussion, in other cases (owing to the general lack of interest in educational matters in a particular unit) the pamphlets were either ignored or handed over to a regimental officer (chosen by various extraordinary means) whose thankless job was then to 'mug up the contents' and then lecture on it.

One other aspect of the A.B.C.A. experiment deserves mention — the effect upon the officer of having to give these weekly talks. For many, no doubt, it was just another bit of drudgery in the dog's life of the over-worked subaltern. But, for many others, on the evidence of their own testimony, it was an opportunity for self-education in citizenship. An officer who took his A.B.C.A. duties seriously was becoming a more conscious observer of current affairs than he had been before. Many platoon officers agreed, for example, that

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A.B.C.A. had caused them to read their papers and magazines more carefully and critically with an eye to talking-points for their men

This, then, was the state of army education at the end of 1941. Up to that time the scheme had worked in those units where the commanding officer had lent his support and where there was a keen and active unit education officer, even the difficult accommodation problems had been overcome. The weakness of the scheme during its early days was that, apart from young soldiers' battalions, all educational activities were voluntary and an awkward commanding officer could condemn a venture despite any flood of enthusiasm which might come from the men. Since the scheme was voluntary, Army Educational Corps officers had no lever whereby they could force their way into a unit to talk to recalcitrant commanding officers. At this time, indeed, a number of individuals in the Army Educational Corps itself felt that the whole scheme ought to be abandoned because of the apparently insuperable difficulties. It was in this setting that A.B.C.A. was born. Now there was a measure of compulsion and a sound reason for visiting units; indeed, in some cases, commanding officers were glad of advice about the best way of organising their A.B.C.A. sessions and invited Army Educational Corps officers to come to see them. This was the opportunity that most members of the Army Educational Corps had been waiting for. It will be interesting to see whether the beach-head of A.B.C.A. did, in fact, lead to an extension of army education.

Chapter Seven

Consolidation

WITH three outstanding exceptions, the years 1943 and 1944 saw no new major developments in army education. Instead, the time was used to drive home the A B C.A spearhead and to consolidate the bridge-heads which had been established in the previous eighteen months or so. The peculiar circumstances under which education was being carried out often made the task of those responsible for carrying on the work seem hopeless. Many Army Educational Corps and regimental personnel felt frustrated and disillusioned, and believed that the whole scheme should be given much more support or abandoned altogether. But, despite all the difficulties, the scheme was not abandoned, and education went on to the refrain of more and more improvisation.

Amidst these conditions, one powerful factor for good emerged — the need to experiment. As a result novel methods of education, which previously had gone little farther than the talking stage, were introduced, and in spite of all the discouraging features which must inevitably be associated with the education of an army in training for war, there was one great advantage — the men and women were available. In civilian life, tutors in adult education had found that, with all their superior resources in material and mental equipment, it was difficult to develop organised classes because it was not easy to secure even a preliminary hearing from the large majority of people, whose sources of diversion and entertainment were readily accessible. In the Army, men and women belonged to a community that could offer little in the way of comfort or commercialised amuse-

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ment. An enterprising education officer could do much to direct some of their enforced leisure into channels other than the thought-deadening streams of mass entertainment. In this and succeeding chapters, some account will be given of the kind of facilities that were offered under the army education scheme, the experiments that were conducted, and the way in which the work progressed.

As we have seen, one activity that was common to many units even before the advent of A.B.C.A. was the discussion group. The following account is of one group whose chairman was Dr. Edward Thompson, fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, the educationist and historian. The group arose spontaneously out of some lectures in the unit, which took place during the long wet nights of the winter of 1940, and which had been well attended. As the period of questions that followed the lectures tended to become discussions of an informal and searching kind, it soon became clear that the audience would rather thrash things out for themselves than be told about them.¹ It was decided to form a discussion group, with different members acting as leaders at each session. So the group was born.

After several evenings of too much discursive argument and general debate, increasing unrest resulted in a crystallisation of the themes that most interested the members. A programme was mapped out on post-war reconstruction under eight different headings. These covered the whole civic and political field from constitutional and parliamentary reform to town planning, amenities and public spaces, and included international relations and even cultural activities. It was agreed that once a week was too infrequent a session and two weekly meetings were arranged with appointed leaders and chairmen.

It's made the winter for me [said one member]. In the Army you are not supposed to discuss anything or to be interested in anything. When my chum told me there was a meeting for discussion where you could say anything you liked, I didn't

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believe him. I said, "That kind of thing doesn't happen in the Army" But he said, "Come and see." So I came. And, by gosh, I found he was right.¹

One rule was made at the beginning; there would be no heresy and no orthodoxy, and no member was to take offence at anything said by another. The result of this freedom was a natural temperance and moderation. Men declared themselves Atheists or Catholics, die-hard Tories or Communists; this was always done courteously, and no one questioned the right to their beliefs. The particular group was composed mostly of gunners, and many of them were drawn from a large survey unit. Usually, survey units take men of a good standard of education, and, in this case, most of the British universities were represented. Schoolmasters and architects were numerous and argued with coal-miners, butchers, ex-policemen, trade union organisers, commercial travellers, solicitors, film technicians and others.

At first the main interest of the group was 'practical', which meant that it was largely political. The men felt that our only chance of survival, as a nation, was in saner and wiser politics than we had known for many years. They wanted to know what kind of a world would be theirs when the Second World War had finished, and how they would reconstruct the happiness that had vanished. There was also a general feeling that, after discussion, the group should reach agreement and express it in some statement of aims and principles; this proved to be impossible because of the constantly changing character of the group — a difficulty which had to be faced by most army discussion groups.

To many, who knew these groups by hearsay only, it would seem that the Army was inviting anarchy by allowing discussion of the sort described above. Certainly, to those who dislike change, or the idea of change, the most dangerous thing about the group, had they attended it, might have been the speed with which doctrinaire vagueness and oratorical cliché disappeared. They would also have been surprised

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by the wealth of inside knowledge of civic and municipal activity and of organisation of shop and factory which gave the discussions an extremely practical air.

By his request [wrote Thompson], a Colonel, accompanied by other officers, attended a meeting which was addressed by the poet, Stephen Spender. The Colonel thanked me next day "for the most exciting and encouraging experience I have had for months", and was amazed at the freedom with which privates discussed the most basic things in society in his presence.¹

After a time, the group found that discussing political issues alone was too circumscribed.

Most of the men were aware that their education was a paltry affair and hungered for knowledge of every kind, trusting their own mind's ability to come to conclusions, but distrusting those minds' store of facts. I asked one of the men why he was taking Arabic (we have classes in Arabic). Did he hope to go East after the war? No, he replied, he was learning Arabic simply because he was determined to learn all he could while in the Army. Another man who was learning Arabic said that if he were offered free tuition in any language he was going to accept it.

This survey of a discussion group has been given prominence partly because this form of educational activity was one that the Army had adopted for its own, but, particularly, in order that the reader might see some of the living flesh that was added by the men themselves to the bare bones of the official pronouncements. The spirit in which this discussion group was conducted was typical of so much of the educational work that was being done. It was that spirit of mutual help that gave the educational scheme as a whole any success it may have achieved.

In contrast to the discussion groups in units, the role of the Army Educational Corps in hospitals may be described. As everyone knows, one soldier in hospital is one less effective member of a unit; the total number of ineffectives at any one time constitutes an important factor in the fighting

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efficiency of an army. Experience had long shown that when sickness and casualties occur, some form of educational activity had provided the soldier with occupation and had speeded his recovery and return to duty. While, in the majority of units, the amount of education that could be done was often limited by the time factor, in hospitals the whole of the day was free, apart from medical treatment and light duties in the ward. As a result, the opportunities for useful occupation — including education — were proportionately increased. These opportunities were readily grasped, and, in its hospital work, the Army Educational Corps obtained results which considerably increased its prestige as an integral part of the British Army.

At first, one of the most difficult — and delicate — problems was to delimit the responsibilities of the Army Educational Corps instructor attached to the hospital. The extension of 'occupational treatment' had resulted in the development of remedial activities using applied arts and crafts which were adapted to exercise injured or defective nerves or muscles. Civilian specialists in this field had obtained official recognition with the title of 'occupational therapists'. In justice to the professional interests of the Association of Occupational Therapists, therefore, as well as in defence of the Army Educational Corps, it had to be made clear that there was no intention of providing 'remedial occupational therapy' under the army education scheme. For convenience it was agreed that the responsibility of the Army Educational Corps should be 'diversional occupation' as distinct from 'remedial occupational therapy' which remained the responsibility of the specialist in the treatment of orthopaedic and psychiatric conditions, under specific medical direction. Yet where occupational therapy ended and diversional occupation began no one was ever clear. Thus, the work of the occupational therapist and the Army Educational Corps instructor coincided in the application of handicrafts. Fortunately the two groups were working to a

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common end, and the goodwill that developed not only prevented friction but also considerably increased the effectiveness of both groups

The fact that soldier-patients were distributed between four distinct hospital groups makes it impossible to describe any scheme that was even generally common to them all. To present a composite picture, each group — the Military Hospitals, Emergency Medical Service Hospitals of the Ministry of Health, Convalescent Homes and Auxiliary Hospitals of the Red Cross and St. John Joint War Organisation, and the Military Convalescent Depots — would each require separate consideration. And even this would not be enough. The peculiarities of individual hospitals were such that no uniform system of education on settled lines could be provided. This was no disadvantage because it gave free play to local initiative and spontaneous effort rather than concentration on standardised methods and techniques.

In effect, the diversional occupations resolved themselves into the kinds that could be carried on alone by individuals or those that were best done collectively. Individually, many soldiers found the long days of their treatment an opportunity to increase their knowledge of their own jobs in the Army. These men were often specialists and welcomed the chance to study the theoretical and technical sides of their new commitments without the constant interruptions and upheavals of life in camp, barrack or billet. "For this purpose," wrote an Army Educational Corps officer who was devoting his whole time to hospitals, "training pamphlets and technical books are provided and lectures and visits to factories arranged."² Others were keen to revise or renew their private studies, and specialist books were provided. Reading is naturally associated with being 'in bed', and books on general subjects were a primary necessity for soldier-patients. The supply of general reading matter was the function of the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John (Joint War Organisation) Hospital Library, and

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it would be impossible to pay too high a tribute to the work of the hospital librarians. But for continuous 'directed reading', individual attention was required usually in excess of that which could be supplied by the librarian, and here the Army Educational Corps instructor, supported by members of the regional committees, did most valuable work.

Collectively, the main educational activities in a hospital were organised on the normal unit lines — discussion groups, musical, play-reading and dramatic circles, gramophone clubs, glee parties and debates. All these activities could be undertaken alike by men in bed and up-patients, while lectures were also arranged in the wards, so that all interested soldiers were able to attend. Classes in languages and other subjects were held at certain hours of the day in bedside groups, if other accommodation was lacking, or if it was desired to include men who were unable to leave the ward. Some occupations were particularly suitable for the bed-ridden, such as weaving, rug-making, embroidery and knitting, soft toy making, drawing, lettering and poster design. Where the instructors were able to persuade the hospital authorities that the value of these crafts to the patients more than made up for the untidiness in the wards, some remarkably beneficial work was done. For ambulatory cases, besides the activities already described, it was possible to arrange classes in carpentry, leather and metal work, upholstery, loom-weaving, book-binding, printing, painting, sign-writing, mechanical drawing and so on.

Of the work that was done by the army education authorities in hospitals, one comment alone is necessary. It paved the way for the introduction of a similar scheme into civilian hospitals. This was revealed by Mr. H. U. Willink, at the time Minister of Health, soon after his appointment to that post was announced. The details of the scheme for civilian hospitals were closely related to the work that was being carried on for soldier-patients, and it is to be hoped that the

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scheme may achieve an equal measure of success. No doubt the work will grow from these small beginnings, and, by returning men and women more quickly and contentedly to their normal occupations, should do much to increase the mental and material productivity of the nation. But while the Army may rightfully claim to be the pioneer in this type of work, the importance of civilian co-operation cannot be over-estimated. As usual, the regional committees lent all possible aid, both by the provision of lecturers and instructors in handicrafts, and by running courses for the training of instructors. Where hospitals were situated in lonely places (many of the convalescent homes were country mansions that had been requisitioned by the Army), organisations like the Women's Institutes and the Rural Community Councils gave considerable support. Besides acting as instructors in various handicrafts, many of the women helped the Army Educational Corps instructor with the general educational programme. Some of these women little realised how much their ministrations meant to the soldier-patients; to those connected with the scheme, it soon became apparent that in an occupational scheme for invalid soldiers, women have a leading part to play.

Other units where army education flourished were the young soldiers' battalions. These battalions consisted entirely of volunteers, whose ages ranged from seventeen and a half to twenty years. On attaining the upper age limit, young soldiers were drafted to service units. The battalions usually consisted of a battalion headquarters and six widely scattered companies. One Army Educational Corps officer described how he and

four serjeant-instructors were responsible for educational training in the unit, and two motor cycles were provided as the sole means of transport. Apparently, the number of educational non-commissioned officers was based on the peace-time establishment of an infantry battalion, namely, four companies, but the reason

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for an establishment of two motor-cycles among five A.E.C. representatives was never clear to anyone.²

The actual educational training in a young soldiers' battalion was divided into compulsory and voluntary work. For the former, there was a definite allotment of five hours a man each week, and the instruction periods were detailed in the weekly company training programmes. Here it was possible to plan educational classes of much greater continuity than was possible in the normal unit; but experience showed that they could not be nearly as continuous as the theorist might expect. These young soldiers' battalions had been raised to fight—most young soldiers were imbued with the ambition to serve overseas and found their enforced stay in Britain irksome sometimes beyond restraint—and the needs of operational work and training were of paramount importance. Further, the battalions were constantly moving, and educational programmes were necessarily interrupted. An idea of the mobility of these young soldiers' battalions was given by Lieutenant (afterwards Major) Wilson. "For example," he wrote, "the past month was marked by three Company changes of location, in addition to Battalion Headquarters changing its location twice."³ Farmers, too, unconsciously limited the amount of educational training that was possible by their urgent and necessary demands for labour, while courses, leave, duties, inoculations and other causes affected the work as it did in all other units. Experience showed that it was essential to divide all subjects up into short, self-contained courses.

In each young soldiers' battalion the work varied according to the interest of the commanding officer, and the keenness and initiative of the Army Educational Corps personnel. It would be impossible, therefore, to describe one scheme which was common to them all; but the following was the kind of work that was generally carried out. Map-reading figured very largely in the programme, as did the teaching of

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English, mathematics, regimental history, and the history and traditions of the British Army. After the introduction of A.B.C.A., periods were devoted each week to the history and geography of those places and events which were dealt with by the regimental officers in their weekly talks based upon the A.B.C.A. bulletins. It is scarcely necessary to add that the subjects had to be dealt with from a practical point of view, and had to arise out of the previous experiences of the men and be correlated to their military training.

On the voluntary side, the greatest difficulty was in the men themselves. Most of them were unfamiliar with the discipline that organised study demands, while the majority were suspicious of the schoolmaster as the person whose clutches they had recently escaped and who was now out to trap them again. It might be said that if, in an ordinary service unit, the earnest seekers after knowledge numbered no more than 20 per cent, in a young soldiers' battalion the figure would be not greater than 10 per cent. The advantages were that the young soldiers could be surreptitiously 'got at' through the compulsory educational periods, while, in addition, their units were usually situated at places far from any town so that there was little to occupy them during their leisure hours. Experience showed that there was not much demand for any of the more formal educational activities. Although attempts were made to organise classes at local technical institutions, it was found that guard and picquet duties, as well as operational exercises, made it almost impossible for the soldiers to maintain regular and punctual attendance. Correspondence courses were not received with any degree of enthusiasm because private study had seldom figured in the previous education of the young soldiers, and they were not able to profit by postal tuition. Where successful classes were arranged, they were usually held in the unit and taken by regimental instructors, although many civilians fitted in to the necessarily elastic demands that were made of them.

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The most successful work, however, was conducted on a more informal basis. In one young soldiers' battalion, each company was given the project of securing and equipping three rooms — an education room, a reading-and-writing room and a quiet room. From this project arose many practical classes to meet immediate and apparent needs. In the first place, the rooms required repairing, and joinery and carpentry became the order of the day, together with a little plumbing and glazing. A class to deal with decorating was also formed, and the interiors were transformed. The electricians installed lighting or modified the existing circuits. When the rooms were finished, classes in handicrafts were formed, and racks, shelves, tables and other articles of furniture were produced. In the same way the rooms were fitted with exhibitions, displays, models, sand-tables and so on. The use of the project method had again justified itself.

The more formal work was organised on much the same lines as in other units. Lectures by civilians were arranged, but were not always successful. Talks by unit personnel were much more effective, especially those in which individuals described their experiences in various campaigns and theatres of war. A library was usually established at company headquarters, most of the books being obtained through the army welfare services. These were the books handed across post-office counters by civilians, "un-wrapped, un-addressed, and un-stamped". They had been asked for at various times by the Prime Minister, and others, to meet the voracious demands for reading matter that the troops were constantly making. Civilians had responded whole-heartedly to the scheme, but one frequently heard them asking whether in fact the books did reach the troops. They did, and were gratefully received. Those that had been 'unloaded' by civilians after filling their shelves for many years did good work — as salvage. A large number, however, was made up of reading matter that

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appealed to the varying tastes of the troops and was received by them with full recognition that they had often been given through the sacrifices of their civilian kinsmen. Other books were obtained from local secondary schools, while door-to-door collections in villages produced excellent results on more than one occasion. Each company library was well used, and the organisers were surprised to find that the losses were very few. Magazines, however, disappeared at an alarming rate.

As in many other units, the British Broadcasting Corporation programmes were not used to any great extent. On one hand, there was a great shortage of receiving sets. Where a wireless set was available, there was little enthusiasm to listen to the disembodied voices that seemed strangely unconnected with the lives of active young soldiers. (Perhaps the listener who, after listening to one B.B.C. talk, remarked that "It's like the voice of God!" was overstating the case, but many young soldiers felt like that. Philosophical problems and questions of apprenticeship seemed equally remote from their existence.)

In one respect, the young soldiers' battalions differed from other units. The teaching resources were almost entirely confined to officers. Usually they gave whole-hearted co-operation, although much depended on the attitude taken by the commanding officers and the company commanders. Classes in many subjects were arranged; but, for reasons already indicated, were kept short, and repeated if necessary. Language classes proved the most popular, especially when they were conducted on a conversational basis. Shorthand classes were well supported, while classes for the more backward men to improve their standard of literacy were usually received with enthusiasm and gratitude. The biggest demands, as might have been expected, were for practical subjects. These included motor engineering and a certain amount of electrical engineering, painting, decorating and sign-writing, while there were numerous miscellaneous

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activities like poster-drawing, book-binding, model-making, toy-making and rug-making. Discussion groups, 'brains trusts' and 'quizzes' were always popular, the latter being most favoured when they were run on a competitive basis with other platoons or companies.

Under the headings of the discussion group, the educational activities in hospitals and young soldiers' battalions, some idea has been given of the kind of work that had emerged in the army education scheme after two years of war. In September 1942 came an important announcement which was to increase the power of compulsion and which was to play a leading part in the educational scheme for some considerable time. Previously, in June 1942, Mr. Bendall had returned to his post at the Board of Education and had been succeeded as Director of Army Education by Mr. J. Burgon Bickersteth. The latter had been in charge of education with the First Canadian Army since September 1940, and with them had built up a comprehensive scheme.

A.B.C.A. had shown that there were wide gaps in the education of many soldiers and auxiliaries and that discussions alone would not fill them. Something more concrete was needed. Mr Bickersteth gave his attention to the educational policy that would be pursued by the British Army, and, after consultation with his colleagues, in September 1942 it was announced from the War Office, that, for the four winter months, November 1942-February 1943, in addition to the weekly A.B.C.A. session, three hours would be allotted each week out of working or training time to education.⁴ The first of these hours was to be devoted to the education of the man as a soldier, the second to the education of the man as a citizen, and the third to the education of the man as an individual. In the period to be concerned with the education of the man as a soldier, the greatest latitude was given to commanding officers to use the time to the best possible advantage, taking into account the

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resources in instructors and the particular needs of their units. Thus, one unit might find it desirable to use this period for map-reading, another for military English (message writing, verbal expression and so on), while other units like Royal Engineer or Artillery units would find it best to do mathematics or mechanics. To help to educate men as citizens, those periods were to be used for talks and discussions on Britain and her way of life, the British Empire and her relations to the other members of the United Nations. The letter stated that "these talks should have the vitally important aim of driving home what we and our Allies are fighting for, as well as our responsibilities as citizens of a democratic country, and as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations". Since there was no suitable text-book which would include all the topics envisaged, it was proposed to issue each month to instructors, who could be officers or other ranks, a booklet covering the various subjects. In the education of the man as an individual, men who were pursuing an organised course of study or any work under the voluntary scheme, such as correspondence courses, hand-work or other subjects, were to be allowed to work privately. For the larger number of men who had no such preference, some organised activity such as a connected series of general lectures, 'brains trusts', debates, discussions, spelling 'bees', might be arranged; private reading or the playing of chess were not to be excluded.

This was the outline of the scheme, and, immediately, means of implementing it were adopted. Short courses were arranged at formation headquarters to help in the training of unit instructors, while 'travelling circuses' were formed to visit, advise and give demonstration lessons to the potential and actual regimental instructors. Further, it was emphasised that this compulsory scheme was not intended in any way to replace the voluntary scheme. Rather, it was hoped that voluntary work would receive fresh impetus because of the new compulsory measure.

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Of the success of the first ' Winter Scheme of Education ' there can be no doubt. Particularly was this true of the period devoted to citizenship. In many cases an intense interest developed in the " British Way and Purpose " series, which had been written by civilians distinguished in their particular spheres and had been issued monthly by the War Office as briefs for instructors. Not unexpectedly, the normal soldier had been surprised to learn that not only had he certain privileges in being a citizen of this " no mean country ", but that he had certain responsibilities as well. For the first time in their lives, many individuals had become possessors of some knowledge, however slight, of the functions of local and national government, matters of which they had known little, and cared less, in civil life.

The ' soldier ' and ' individual ' hours were taken up in different ways and with varying degrees of enthusiasm in different units. Thus, for the headquarters staff of one command, a practical series of map-reading exercises was followed by a course of talks on the history of the Army, with particular reference to the regiments of the men in the audiences. These talks had a stimulating effect on the military efficiency of men and women who were tending to become mere ' office wallahs '. An example of where the ' individual ' hour was put to good use occurred in a Regimental Pay unit. The unit education officer was a former schoolmaster and set about his task with infectious enthusiasm. When visited by the Army Educational Corps officer, he modestly explained that he had been able to arrange thirty-two classes in subjects ranging from science to shorthand. Thirty of the instructors were men and women from his unit and two only needed to be drawn from civilian resources.

But, as already stated, the real success of the Winter Scheme had been the citizenship talks based upon the British Way and Purpose pamphlets. So many A.B.C.A. discussions had foundered either on the rocks of pure

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ignorance or on the complete unawareness of a sense of responsibility to the community. These British Way and Purpose talks and discussions, which were usually competently given by civilian lecturers or Army Educational Corps instructors, for the first time brought many men and women face to face with important issues which could not be avoided and by uncomfortable facts which they could not deny. The British Way and Purpose venture had succeeded in its declared aim of making many men and women aware of their place in the community.

It was no surprise, therefore, in February 1943, to find that, while the 'soldier' and 'individual' hours would be dropped for the time being, the citizenship periods would continue to be regarded as part of the training programme, and British Way and Purpose pamphlets would still be issued each month to help the instructors. This series, in fact, continued until May 1944, and ceased then, after the eighteenth issue, only because it was felt that enough material had been supplied to keep the Army discussing the whys and wherefores of good citizenship for a long time. Later the pamphlets were issued in book form accompanied by outline notes which could be used for preparing study courses on politics and citizenship.

Side by side with the British Way and Purpose talks went the courses for regimental instructors of all ranks. No indication of the total number of courses that was arranged or of the range and content could be given. It may be sufficient to say that in one district, some thirty to sixty unit instructors at a time attended courses at the University of Leeds dealing with the background of citizenship and the methods of 'putting it over' in the unit. These courses lasted for seven or fourteen days, took place at least once a month, and continued from November 1942 until March 1944. The lecturers included some Army Educational Corps representatives but were mainly drawn from the staff of the University; the latter deserve the highest praise not only

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for the high quality of the lectures but also for the way they helped to give these army students an insight into university life. No one who attended any of these courses could fail to be impressed by the tremendous contribution which this joint Service-civilian effort had made to adult education. And this was but the work of one district and one university. Alternating with these courses, the Leeds University Regional Committee organised rather different types of courses for unit instructors in the Anti-Aircraft Command. It may be seen that the combined effects of all the courses in all the districts and all the universities could not fail to have a powerful influence on the civic outlook of the instructors attending. They, in turn, were bound to have their effect on the men and women in their units. The cumulative influence surely represented one of the greatest educational contributions to democratic practice that had yet been made.

But the British Way and Purpose experiment did not stop with talks in units or courses at university or army centres. That was only the beginning. When serving men and women began to hear about civic institutions they wanted not only to know what went on in them but to see for themselves. So began a programme of visits which was still running some four years later. Visits to council meetings, to law-courts and to schools of all types; visits to gasworks, to transport undertakings and to sewage farms; visits to any place where the people's welfare was at stake (including the Houses of Parliament), all these were carried out and many more. It reflects the greatest credit not only on their sponsors — regional committees can never be too highly praised for what they did in arranging these visits — but also on those who allowed the visits to take place and who submitted to the keen questioning of so many young men and women who were becoming aware of themselves as citizens.

As time went on efforts were made to obtain the greatest possible value from these visits. Very often those taking part had obtained far less from them than they might have

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done because they did not know what to look for when they arrived. " Briefing " sessions were therefore introduced in which soldiers and auxiliaries were told of the purpose of their visits in some detail. Nor was this enough. Too often visits that were both stimulating and informative did not get over as they might have done because they were not followed up. So it became almost a rule that, after visits to places of interest, there should be, not a post mortem, but a public enquiry. In this way a civic consciousness began to arise which became apparent inside the Army and out.

In some cases the visits already described were but a pointer to schemes of a more comprehensive nature which led to an even greater sense of social awareness. Instead of paying formal visits to institutions of local and national importance, a group of soldiers and auxiliaries might decide to invade a town for a day. During that time they would have been found in small parties (often in twos)

collecting a vast amount of information ; particulars about the streets and footpaths, about the size and building construction of houses, and whether or not they had inside drainage ; about the work of the community and the transport arrangements for taking workers to and from their jobs ; about schools, technical training, social sciences, recreational facilities.*

That evening one couple of the group would have been found telling the other members about the market-place and what the markets meant to the life of the community.

Another couple [wrote Senior-Commander (afterwards Chief-Commander) Roger] had undertaken a rapid survey of a residential district to the north of the town. They reported that the housewives complained of the distance from shops and restaurants and the inadequacy of buses. The children from that estate had to go to school at the opposite side of the town.

And so it went on until there had been built up a broad if sketchy picture of the environment, work and living conditions in that town.

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So, through discovery, was evoked the art of teaching the troops to find out for themselves. By looking at places from different side-lines, they began to see that even facts had many facets. The welfare of workers in industry might seem very different to the employers and the employed. Service men and women were beginning to learn not only of the organisation of civic institutions and undertakings but also of the problems of rapidly changing civilisation. In tackling their investigations in a co-operative spirit, they also realised that this might be the spirit which would best solve the problems of the community. From the British Way and Purpose pamphlets which had been first issued in November 1942, to the sense of civic responsibility which had been awakened by the time many men and women left the Army, was a notable development. The country is still in debt to Mr. Bickersteth and his assistants

One brick only might have been thrown at the British Way and Purpose scheme. Many people felt that too great emphasis was placed upon the 'means' of citizenship and not enough upon the 'ends'. It is true that one British Way and Purpose pamphlet issued in May 1943 — called *The Responsible Citizen* and written by Barbara Ward and A D K Owen — got down to the bed-rock of democracy and discussed such fundamental issues as freedom, liberty, equality and so on. But this particular pamphlet caused a great deal of controversy, and many B.W.P. instructors protested because they said it was not their duty to discuss issues involving morals, ethics or, as they termed it, "The Christian Way and Purpose". In some cases this particular pamphlet was dealt with by the padre; where there was no padre, it was generally shelved. Afterwards, little attempt was made by the War Office to promote discussion about the principles of democracy and attention was largely focussed on the machinery of democratic institutions.

One regional committee secretary who was concerned about the need for considering fundamentals did some

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valuable work in arranging twelve-day residential courses for members of H M. Forces. These he has described in an article called "Fresh Air and a View".⁶ Feeling that real attention was being devoted to "Citizenship", he began to ask what else of interest and value might be done. "Citizenship", like "patriotism", he felt, was not "enough", and eventually organised a course with the concept of freedom as the central idea.

Profiting from experience gained on this course, a second one was run and was called, rather elaborately, "Common and Uncommon in the Century of the Common Man". It would be difficult to assess the success of these courses, but there is little doubt that Mr. Waller and his colleagues had conducted a valuable experiment in helping the average man and woman in their search for truth. It was an experiment which might have been taken up on a larger scale.

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Chapter Eight

The Auxiliary Territorial Service (A.T.S.)

IN the preceding account, the educational activities of the Auxiliary Territorial Service (A.T.S.) have been discussed concurrently with those of the men. In many respects their demands were the same, and, as we shall constantly observe, the facilities provided were organised on a co-educational basis, to the mutual advantage of both sexes. In other respects, the women made different educational demands from the men, and needed different treatment. Further, many members of the A.T.S. were to be found in units that did not include soldiers, so that separate arrangements had to be made for them. This section will be concerned with the way the army educational scheme was received and implemented by these auxiliaries.

In February 1942 a committee was appointed by the Prime Minister "to enquire into and report into amenities and welfare conditions in the three Women's Services, and to make recommendations". The chairman of the Committee was Dr. Violet Markham and the report was published in September 1942.¹ It was refreshingly outspoken and presented its findings with vision and penetrating sincerity. In the paragraphs dealing with education, the committee stated that the cultural needs in camps were not being met and that the co-operation of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (C.E.M.A.) should be obtained.*

* This was seldom done. The Entertainments National Service Association (E.N.S.A.) continued to be the main source of supply of musical and dramatic performances for the Services, while C.E.M.A. still mostly catered for civilians. Many serving men and women felt that, on the cultural plane, civilians were getting the best of things. E.N.S.A.

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General education, the committee reported, was provided for in each Service, and the War Office was congratulated on the imagination and thoroughness which marked this branch of its work. So far as organisation and facilities were concerned, the committee felt that the authorities all provided generously for any educational demand made on them by the men and women of the Services. Then came the indictment which was undoubtedly the hard core of the problem for army educationists.

But it would be idle to pretend that the demand is in any respect equal to the possible supply [the report stated], and many soldiers, like many civilians, have an abysmal ignorance of national and international affairs. If men are apathetic about education, women are more so. . . . It is a melancholy reflection on the educational failures of the last twenty-five years that many young people refuse to use their minds at all outside working hours, and their only cry is for amusement without any demand made on their initiative, industry or intelligence.

The committee went on to point out that indifference to education was not peculiar to any one class in Britain, and that it was not surprising to find that few officers had felt moved to turn their attention to the ploughing of an unpromising fallow. But there were exceptions, "and the eagerness of classes where interest and imagination has been grasped has a moral all its own".¹ It would have been an undeserved reproach to the young womanhood of the country to relegate them to an intellectual level which found its stimulus alone in amusement or in some form of training with a career value. "Granted the right approach, appreciation of history, literature, music and art is not beyond the reach of many Service women, and every effort towards this end should be made." It was strongly recommended that an adequate number of women of suitable rank and relevant

was able to provide plenty of admirable entertainment (and some that was deplorable) and some good concerts and plays, but these were very limited in number when one remembers the size of the audience for which they were trying to provide.

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experience should be appointed as education officers in the field to ascertain the outlook and requirements of the rank and file and stimulate interest. This recommendation had been anticipated, however, and A.T.S. education officers had, in fact, been appointed some months before the report was published. The suggestion that the A.B.C.A. scheme "should be invariably applied in the A.T.S." had also been accepted in principle, if not in practice.

The importance of the report was not only that it focussed public attention on the conditions in the women's Services. The vital issue was also raised whether army discipline as laid down for men was psychologically suitable for women, and if so, whether it was compatible with education. On these issues there was no single answer; but, in general, it was agreed that auxiliaries had enrolled to perform very serious military work, and that some degree of discipline would have to be maintained. As for the incompatibility of education and discipline, similar issues had been raised for the men. Everyone realised that the Army was not the ideal place to arrange educational schemes, but it was, nevertheless, true that valuable work had been done both with men and women, the majority of whom had taken no part in any organised scheme of adult education in civilian life. The chief critics of the educational activities of the A.T.S. were usually people who were unfamiliar with the rigorous and never-ceasing demands made on the auxiliaries, and who set their standards of comparison by the organised classes of civilian bodies like the university extra-mural departments.

A correspondent in *The Highway* got much nearer to the heart of the matter when she wrote :

The problem of education for girls in the Army is very simply stated, but that is the only simple thing about it. Here is a constant stream of girls from all localities, and with widely varying backgrounds, more mixed in classes than in civvy street (though the classes are largely stratified by rank); and they are all under authority, where they can be shaped by their present environment,

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and encouraged to look forward to and plan their lives and the life of society after the war. We take it for granted that we wish to educate them for a democratic society, but here is the heart of the problem, for can any education for democracy be effective, when in fact for 24 hours every day these girls are being taught and conditioned by a (comparatively) benevolent dictatorship ?

After a realistic description of the effects of a rigid discipline on the lives of the girls, the correspondent went on to say :

In all this, one feature of the present Army stands out strongly. When you are dealing with the Army education department, you are in a different atmosphere, one in which human values count, and a measure of equality and freedom prevails.

Of the A.B.C A. period (the only compulsory educational feature at that time), the writer stated that the normal girl knew nothing, and cared less, for current affairs.

Here it must be remembered that, compared with the men, the Auxiliary Territorial Service was a young branch of the Army. From November 1942 onwards, 56 per cent of the intake of girls were less than twenty-one years of age. Again, more professional and skilled women workers had been prevented from joining the Services than the corresponding classes of men, and this had led to further educational discrimination against the A.T.S. and the other women's Services. Statistics collected during 1942, 1943 and 1944 showed that 92 per cent of the recruits to the A.T.S. had had elementary and post-primary education without taking school certificate, 5.3 per cent had taken school certificate and 0.7 per cent higher school certificate. Before joining up, about 31 per cent of the girls had worked in some sort of clerical jobs, 15 per cent in shops, 16 per cent had been in domestic service and 23 per cent had been in unskilled manual work. But even these figures make it difficult to understand why, at one A.T.S. training centre, 70 per cent of the recruits did not know that they had the right to vote.

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To be successful with girls, A.B.C.A. would have to start near home and stress the human problems involved in war, or in reconstruction, rather than in strategy and tactics ; to approach social and political principles rather than political events, again through subjects most nearly related to actual experiences, such as housing, working conditions, local rather than national government and so on. This correspondent would have been gratified to find that, after much experiment, the approach suggested did become the one that was most often used in the discussions on current events. At the same time, a larger majority of girls than might have been expected by people who believed in the 'homely' approach, showed that they were deeply interested in politics as such, in the operations of war, and, indeed, in any of the subjects which had hitherto been regarded as exclusively the province of men

An indication of the voluntary activities that were carried out by the A.T.S. was shown in a survey made by a Scottish Workers' Educational Association tutor, Miss Agnes Smith, with an A.T.S. searchlight training unit.² The investigation was made before A.B.C.A. was introduced, so that no degree of compulsion existed. The experiment was initiated when one of the officers responsible for the training of a searchlight unit of the A.T.S. approached the Workers' Educational Association to see whether anything could be done to develop the educational interests of the women under training. It was arranged that Miss Smith should undertake the work and should spend one week with the unit, this being the longest time that could be made available. The purpose of the week's work was to discover whether educational and recreational facilities could be added to the searchlight duties which the group of girls would be undertaking, the nature and extent of these activities, how best they could be fitted into a weekly programme, and to make arrangements for launching such a programme when the members had been trained and transferred to isolated sites where access to

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normal educational and recreational facilities might be difficult.

The result was wholly encouraging. Miss Smith was "surprised and pleased at the physical and mental energy shown by this group of A.T.S. members, and also by the variety of their interests and the extent of their knowledge". The group was composed of forty-eight girls. From these the following subject groups took shape: gardening, thirty-nine members; arts and crafts, thirty-one; drama and poetry, thirty-five; French, thirty-three; musical appreciation, twenty-eight; singing, fifteen; discussions, twenty-six; shorthand and typing, fifteen and twenty-three; natural science, twenty. Meanwhile, twenty-nine members pledged themselves to individual study, thirteen of whom were concerned with psychology. The problem of leadership, which might have proved a formidable one in an isolated unit, solved itself to a surprisingly gratifying degree. The enthusiasm of the auxiliaries overcame the difficulty from the start. Those with talents or knowledge came forward, and in each group a committee was formed for organising the work and encouraging the abilities of the less-able members. Finally, a tentative programme was compiled, and preparations made for launching the scheme. The commanding officer gave his assurance that the plans would be adhered to, and that a period of an hour and a half would be devoted to educational work each day. (Miss Smith must have indeed been a persuasive person.) How the plan worked out was not revealed — and this was where the best of schemes fell down — but enough has been written to show that, in this unit, as in many others, the task of providing educational facilities for the A.T.S. was being assiduously tackled, although there was not always the enthusiasm that the girls in this searchlight unit showed.

By the end of 1942 it was possible to write that education in the A.T.S. had taken hold, and, gradually, was being extended. Undoubtedly the appointment of A.T.S.

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staff officers (education) to headquarters of commands and districts had had a stimulating effect, and accounted for the increased interest and action which was reported from various districts and areas. Where working conditions permitted, A.T.S. units responded well to the 'Winter Scheme' (see p. 137); but, in general, the response was still patchy. A considerable number of units had been unable to carry out the scheme in full, and the work that was done had taken place on the 'in night'. This was the one night of the week when the auxiliaries were confined to their quarters to perform individual domestic chores and for various routine inspections. The imposition of education on this night was not regarded with great favour by many girls and will be discussed later.

While the Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces reported that the women's Services still only absorbed a comparatively small part of regional committee resources, it was encouraging to learn that the number of lectures given by civilians to auxiliaries had increased eight-fold between September 1941 and March 1943. The A.T.S. had been strongly represented on courses arranged to provide instructors for the 'Winter Scheme' — a special seven-day course for A.T.S. officers was held at Newnham College, Cambridge, for example — while, in mixed units, the A.T.S. representation on unit education committees was steadily increasing. Many courses in 'minor household repairs' were organised for A.T.S.; they proved to be very popular, and technical institutions reported on the keenness and adaptability of the students. Handicrafts were much in demand and, in some commands, A.T.S. handicrafts instructors were given the rank of corporal and attached to hospitals and convalescent homes.

Already the regional committees had anticipated the increasing demands that came from the women's Services by attaching lecturers particularly suited to deal with those subjects which the auxiliaries were asking for; experience

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had shown and confirmed that the more personal approach and treatment of topic was needed. In mixed audiences, moreover, it was often found that it was not easy for a tutor to deal with his material with distinct groups consisting of young women on one hand and older and more experienced men on the other, here better results were obtained by taking the two groups separately.

A difficulty not unknown with soldiers proved even more intractable with auxiliaries, namely, the time when education should be carried out. Although the compulsory educational periods were as applicable to the A.T.S. as to the men, in most cases the auxiliaries were under the ultimate control of male officers who often refused to grant them time off during working hours to attend educational sessions. Not infrequently, therefore, the compulsory education periods were held on the 'in nights', and although some valuable work of a continuous nature was done at these times, the arrangement came in for a great deal of criticism from the auxiliaries and their officers. To find out the substance of these criticisms, one regional committee (Reading) conducted a twelve-months experiment in compulsory education among 300-400 members of the A.T.S. during their 'in nights'.³ The evidence collected showed that although there was a real demand for a variety of activities, the compulsory work done on 'in nights' had prejudiced many of the auxiliaries against voluntary educational work and had even discouraged them from doing what they would have liked to do in their own time. Since many men were getting their A.B.C.A. and British Way and Purpose sessions during working hours, it seemed unfair to the auxiliaries that they should have to give up time in an evening which they might have devoted to activities of their own choosing. Despite the conclusions reached as a result of this experiment, however, the bulk of the compulsory education for the A.T.S. continued to be done on 'in nights'.

Nevertheless, the over-all demands for education from the

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A.T.S. continued to grow, and, by the end of 1944, there was a considerable amount of useful work being done in mothercraft, housecraft and domestic science, as well as other cultural activities. Many short courses and classes were devoted to these subjects and often there was a waiting-list of girls anxious to attend. The controlling factor was the number of suitably qualified teachers, and there is little doubt that if the number of teachers could have been increased, the volume of work would have been greatly expanded. Regional committees gave considerable help in this kind of education and enlisted the support of medical officers of health, health visitors and nurses, domestic science colleges, Ministry of Food officials, gas, electricity and other public utility companies, as well as local education authorities, in order to provide the necessary instruction and demonstrations.

Towards the end of 1943 a great stride in A.T.S. education had been taken when authority was given for the appointment of A.T.S. serjeants to carry out educational duties on a full-time basis. The value of these appointments was quickly seen; the non-commissioned officers were able to discover needs and arouse interests in a different way from the officer and they proved an admirable complement to the education staff officer (A.T.S.) at district headquarters. Gradually these A.T.S. serjeants obtained a standing similar to that held by the Army Educational Corps serjeants and warrant officers in the Army. Through their enthusiasm and interest, and the support of the A.T.S. education officers, activities began to grow in range and volume. The effect on the quality of work was also well marked. This was reflected in the number of experiments that were carried out in this field of adult education which had hitherto been almost completely neglected. At one course for A.T.S. instructors, for example, which had been arranged to discuss the current British Way and Purpose pamphlet, an ingenious variation of the 'brains trust' technique was adopted.⁴ The pamphlet

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dealt with education, and it was decided to let those attending the course hear something from the consumers' angle. A children's 'brains trust' from a neighbouring school was recruited, and the members, varying in age from seven to nine years, answered questions on their own education, giving opinions on their favourite size of classes, teachers, methods and subjects they liked best, and so forth.*

In another command a course of lectures on ballet, with practical demonstrations, proved popular and was followed up by visits to Sadler's Wells. Another experiment undertaken by the A.T.S. was the compilation of a book of original short stories, verse and essays. A further way in which some members of the A.T.S. made the most of their opportunities was illustrated by a holding unit in Anti-Aircraft Command. In the autumn of 1943 the duties were so arranged that each week the auxiliaries spent two days in maintaining the camp, two days harvesting and two on educational activities. On the education days a course was planned on the theme "The Home and the Future". This extended over a period of some weeks and included classes in cookery, laundry-work, and sewing, demonstrations of bottling, soft furnishing, care of clothing, etc. From this practical foundation the lecturers went on to deal with local government, the social services, and, finally, to problems of national government and reconstruction.

The way in which A.T.S. education developed may also be seen by considering the types of courses arranged for them. In 1943 and 1944 the interest in the Education Bill that was being discussed in the House of Commons led to the organisation of many courses in which the main proposals of the Bill were considered. One command even arranged courses for potential teachers which were designed to give the auxiliaries a picture of the whole field of education under

* One excellent story came out of this experiment. A very small girl was asked by a non-commissioned officer why English was her favourite subject. She caused a sensation by replying, "Because it enlarges my vocabulary and enables me to converse more easily with other persons."

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the new Act. In one training centre a pre-nursing course was organised; a course for club leaders in the same unit was recognised by the National Council of Girls' Clubs. What could be done when opportunities were seized was also indicated by one mixed (heavy) regiment of Anti-Aircraft Command. During a cessation of flying-bomb activities in the summer of 1944, the 400-500 members of the A.T.S. were accommodated in one large building and carried out an educational programme for eight hours each day over a period of three weeks.

Particularly successful courses in home-making were run in London District in the autumn of 1944. The end of the war in Europe seemed to be just around the corner, and many A.T.S. units began to clamour for home-making courses. The help of the London County Council was invoked and was given most generously. Two L.C.C. schools, each having good domestic science accommodation and equipment, were made available, as well as two full-time and two part-time instructors. In October fortnightly courses were begun at the two centres, each accommodating sixteen students. These continued for several months and, although only the fringe of home management could be touched on these courses, the invaluable help of the London County Council, His Majesty's inspector in domestic subjects, and the sterling work of the instructors convinced many auxiliaries that there is a tremendous scope for talent in running a home.

One course that attracted a great deal of attention was arranged by the Association for Education in Citizenship, in co-operation with the army education authorities. It originated with a group of auxiliaries and non-commissioned officers who wished to learn how to stimulate in their companions an interest in public affairs and the habit of discussing them. The course was planned to cover a selection of subjects likely to have special attraction for women, sources of information and how to use them. Twenty-four auxili-

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aries and non-commissioned officers drawn from a wide area attended the course. Most of them were women in their early twenties, many of them married. They came from villages, towns and cities in England and Scotland and were products of elementary, secondary and private schools. The quality of the discussions was frequently remarked upon by those who had organised the course, and it soon became apparent that all the auxiliaries had strong views on problems of housing, education, public health services, town planning and so on. They felt a desire to arouse other women to interest and to a sense of common responsibility for the future of society in Britain. Probably the most interesting point arising from this course, however, was the strongly expressed view that, apart from a few notable exceptions, the majority of these auxiliaries did not look forward to taking an active part in public life; they expected to make home and children almost, if not quite, a full-time job. At first sight it seemed disappointing that these young women were not more anxious to exercise their right to participate in civic and national affairs. Nevertheless there were indications that their attitude did not signify a retreat from responsibility but a re-evaluation of social responsibility as shared by men and women, a division by function which represented co-operation, and which deserves close study from those who are concerned with the education and political training of women.

The desire to help themselves to help others grew more pronounced the longer the War went on. Towards the end of 1944 there was an incessant demand for more and more training for those officers and auxiliaries who were acting as British Way and Purpose instructors, while from A.B.C.A. discussions it was reported that auxiliaries were asking for more fact and less discussion. One command became concerned at the lack of interest shown by auxiliaries in science, and arranged several courses to demonstrate the practical applications of science.

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From all these courses it may be seen that the Second World War was not altogether devoid of blessing for the young women of Britain. Certainly it would be no platitude to say that the auxiliary of 1945 was not the immature, politically inexperienced girl who had joined up in 1939.

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Chapter Nine

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BESIDES the discussions which had been organised on a voluntary basis and which took place in off-duty hours (see p. 126), there were, of course, the discussions in training or working hours that had been initiated by the advent of A.B.C.A. (see p. 120). Before considering the influence of these A.B.C.A. discussions, it needs to be emphasised that voluntary discussions were no new thing in the Army. (The value of the discussion method had been well brought out by the Arab sage when he remarked: "The lecture is one; the discussion one thousand") Cromwell's Army, for example, spent a considerable part of its time in discussing topics very similar to those that were being considered with such vigour in the Second World War. In the Levellers' "Petition to the House of Commons" of September 11, 1648, for example, pleas were made for dealing with such topics as conscription, monopolies, taxes, social security, war criminals *and* army pay.¹ In Wellington's Army, public discussions by (Methodist) soldiers were so common that they were brought to the notice of the commander-in-chief, who stated that they were "not in themselves an objectionable practice". Attention has already been directed to the discussion groups organised during the First World War (see p. 53). In order that A.B.C.A. discussions could be organised in the most unpretentious surroundings in the most informal way at the most appropriate times, no official A.B.C.A. 'returns' were asked for. Within six months of its introduction, however, command education officers suggested that at least 80 per cent of units had arranged these

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discussion groups, and, although sample investigations of A.B.C.A. travelling officers yielded the lower figure of approximately 60 per cent, both sources of evidence agreed that the figure was rising.² The value of these discussions was revealed in many ways. Where A.B.C.A. was carried out conscientiously by a regimental officer with his platoon, the informality and the sense of community brought home to the officer the significance of his duty towards the mental welfare of his men. The worth of this new officer-man relationship was indicated by Lord Gorell :

There is, indubitably, a new spirit abroad, that spirit of a man being a man "for a' that", which has, in some of its manifestations at any rate, been decidedly lacking in the past. . . . That the new spirit is abroad . . . is, I think, established by an institution which goes by the initials of A.B.C.A.³

Many of the keener officers remarked how A.B.C.A. discussions had given them unexpected clues to problems which were troubling their men ; these were private worries which were so exacerbating the men that they revealed them, often unconsciously, during a discussion of some general topic.*

Further evidence of the importance of the discussion group was provided by one command education officer who, in a report, stated that

the most striking illustrations of the men's attitude to discussion is a highly favoured group which has had the service of such distinguished lecturers as have passed through the Command. Enthusiasm gradually waned until the men were left alone with a junior officer and given a chance to do their own talking — since when the group has become keen and attentive.

* This was indicated by an anecdote which was typical of hundreds of others. One officer was telling his men about China, where he had lived, and made a passing reference to the domestic organisation of a Chinese peasant household. This side issue later impelled one of his men to speak to him privately about a tangle the man had got into over his separation allowance.

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This was also brought out by a correspondent who, in attempting to shift the reasons for the dislike of education by the masses ("Mention the word 'Education' and you scare off 90 per cent of the men"), stated :

My belief, after many meetings with members of the Forces, is that what he likes best is to meet in a small company with someone as a kind of leader, where discussion and enquiry can be held without any sort of formality, and where opinion, however immature, can be ventilated without the fear of ridicule.⁴

That the A.B.C.A. discussions were popular was borne out by many witnesses. So, too, was the need for them. Thus, one civilian lecturer, who had had considerable experience of talking to the troops, wrote that

Many friends have asked whether the soldier is interested in Government and politics. Interested? Yes, but there is an appalling lack of knowledge about local and national government. This was put in another way by the Director of A.B.C.A. when he wrote :

The grim fact must be faced that the average citizen — in khaki or out of it — is an illiterate in citizenship. The majority of the population, and the majority of officers, have read little about Current Affairs, shown the usual feeble resistance to the many-voiced "guidance" of the Press, and spent little of their leisure in any kind of debate of topics of the day :

One of the difficulties in organising A.B.C.A. periods was the condition that the discussions should be conducted by regimental officers. This was possible in most units, but, like most Army Council instructions, the operation of the scheme showed that there were bound to be widespread exceptions. It was soon realised, for example, with many anti-aircraft (especially searchlight) groups, that A.B.C.A. sessions would be impossible unless conducted by other ranks. From the outset this variation was applied at the discretion of commanding officers ; but, in order that the officer-man relationship should be strengthened in discussion

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of current events, the principle remained that, wherever possible, discussions should be conducted with regimental officers in the chair.

One main — and just — criticism of A.B.C.A. had been put forward by competent critics from the time of its inception; it was the lack of background knowledge and the inexperience of so many regimental officers in leading discussion groups; it was not the first occasion on which an educational experiment had been opposed on the ground that there were not enough trained teachers to carry it out. That cry had been raised when it was proposed to provide compulsory education for children, and on each subsequent occasion when it was proposed to make education more accessible. But, as Mr. W. E. Williams declared, "in all the processes of educational expansion there must inevitably be an interim period of improvisation, and so it is with A.B.C.A." Many critics, who hoped for its success, as well as those who did not, asserted that A.B.C.A. would fail because it had been entrusted to the amateur. One of the drawbacks to A.B.C.A. — indeed to any discussion method of education — was that it was slower to produce concrete results than the direct method of teaching. Since it also demanded a high degree of skill from the leader, it may be seen that in deciding that army discussion groups should be run by regimental officers, the higher authorities were pinning their faith in the good sense and adaptability of those officers.

Nevertheless, it was recognised by its sponsors that the weakness of A.B.C.A. was the lack of knowledge of current affairs of many regimental officers. Although A.B.C.A. succeeded in stimulating interest in social and political affairs and encouraged men to discuss and argue about topical events instead of regarding them with habitual indifference, it was freely admitted — except by a few — that argument and discussion in themselves were not particularly valuable unless they were informed by a moderate amount of knowledge. It was recognised that there was a danger in

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placing a false emphasis on the means of democracy such as discussion, rather than on its ends, and of leading people to believe that opinions were valuable irrespective of the amount of information on which they were based. As time went on this weakness tended to be eliminated because, as men argued, they saw more and more that their discussions often ended in smoke because of the lack of information within the groups. Officers began to recognise the need for thorough preparation, and, within a few years, some who had approached A.B.C.A., in a very apprehensive spirit became discussion leaders of no little merit.

From the start, the A.B.C.A. directorate had recognised that the issue of bulletins providing 'background' information to every officer was not by any means enough to make him an effective leader of discussions on current affairs. The bulletin needed to be reinforced by practice in method; this practice was provided in various ways. The regional committees, for example, in collaboration with the Army Educational Corps, had provided week-end courses and conferences at which officers were given information on the technique of discussion group leading as well as actual practice. Army Educational Corps 'circuses' — touring teams of demonstrators — were also formed to visit units and give on-the-spot instruction to regimental officers. Visits to units were also made by full-time civilian lecturers who expounded the principles of A.B.C.A. and gave practical hints on the methods of conducting it. Special courses for commanding officers and unit education officers were arranged at the Army School of Education, Wakefield. The week-end courses were frequently held in university premises — a factor which proved of great value in promoting an appropriate sense of the prestige of such activities. The 'circuses' were employed as a rule where no university or similar centre was available, as in Kent or Sussex. In the first three months of the A.B.C.A. scheme, some 2400 officers attended week-end courses and nearly 5000 attended

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demonstrations by travelling teams.

Against the total number of officers in the British Army, however, this number was extremely small, and, in many cases, units took measures to help themselves in making their discussions on topical events more effective. In some units 'brains trusts' were arranged, consisting of the more knowledgeable men of the unit, reinforced sometimes by well-informed civilians from the locality. These 'brains trusts' met regularly and tackled those current problems which had been left unsolved in A.B.C.A. sessions. In addition to 'brains trusts', several other well-known methods of presenting current events in a dramatic manner were carried out at different times in many units. Among them might be mentioned debates, mock trials and mock parliaments, and 'the living newspaper'. The last-named was a device, first developed in the United States, which consisted of a graphic simplification of outstanding items in the week's news.

Civilians, too, helped the units directly, and some of them held fortnightly seminars for officers in the locality. At these meetings, the expert gave a commentary on the most recent A.B.C.A. bulletins and indicated to officers how they could classify and transmit the information it contained, and what kind of questions they might expect to arise from it. Sometimes this advisory role was taken by one of the more knowledgeable officers in the unit. Further help was given to regimental officers by the A.B.C.A. directorate with the provision of small reference libraries, usually consisting of an encyclopaedia, an atlas, *Whitaker's Almanack*, and a few standard works of history, geography, economics and sociology.

Nor was the visual projection of current affairs forgotten. Realising that many men and women assimilate information much more readily through pictures than the spoken word, small but attractive exhibitions of photographs were circulated to units for display in quiet rooms, recreation rooms,

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army study centres and canteens. These exhibitions generally consisted of 30-60 photographs of good size, fully mounted, with enough captions to make them self-explanatory. Examples of the subjects dealt with were. "The Story of Flight", "Oil", "The Port of London", "Russia's Armed Forces", "Industrial Britain", "How to Look at Architecture", "History of Town Planning", "British History through Maps", "Egypt, and the Suez Canal". Within four years of the inception of A.B.C.A. well over two hundred separate exhibitions had been produced with several copies of each.

The introduction of A.B.C.A. to British troops at home was soon followed by demands from other places and by other Services. These were met so far as possible, and, six months after the official birth of A.B.C.A., it was possible to write.

Since A.B.C.A. was first laid on in the Home Forces, the idea has been applied, in some measure, in other places and in other Services.

- (a) The first to come in were the Canadian Forces, who receive both bulletins on full scale.
- (b) The success of A.B.C.A. in the Canadian Forces overseas led, early in 1942, to a request from Canada that A.B.C.A. should despatch matrices of issue for republication and issue to the Canadian Forces in Canada.
- (c) A.B.C.A. bulletins are sent out each week to the Middle East and India where they are reprinted on the spot.
- (d) Copies of both bulletins are sent to the following stations: Gibraltar, West Africa, Faroes, Iceland, East Africa, Bermuda, Burma, Ceylon, Jamaica, Malta, Mauritius, Pretoria.
- (e) The Admiralty are now A.B.C.A.'s customers to the tune of 3850 bulletins each week. These are issued on an appropriate scale to H.M. ships
- (f) 1150 copies of each bulletin are going to R.A.F. stations in this country.
- (g) Reports on the constitution and results of A.B.C.A. have been called for by the Army authorities of the U.S.A., the

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Dominion of New Zealand and the Union of South Africa.

- (h) From Easter of 1942 the Home Guard have adopted A.B.C.A. and bulletins are now being supplied down to companies.
- (i) Discussions have taken place between A.B.C.A. and the Civil Defence authorities, some of whom are anxious to organise something of the A.B.C.A. type for full-time Civil Defence personnel. Although it is not suggested that A.B.C.A. should supply its bulletins to Civil Defence, A.B.C.A. is giving Civil Defence authorities all possible aid in organising facilities of the A.B.C.A. type for their men and women.²

A.B.C.A. had begun as an improvisation, but, within two years, the then Secretary of State for War, Sir James Grigg, stated:

It is getting on for two years since the Army Council decided to set up A.B.C.A. At the beginning, fears were entertained, on the one hand, lest it should become too political, and, on the other, lest it should fail to interest the soldier. Both fears have been proved groundless, and it is now almost universally accepted that, whenever officers have taken the trouble to work it sensibly and with keenness, A.B.C.A. has been an outstanding success.³

By this time A.B.C.A. had become recognised as an essential part of army life. It was not confined to troops at home, and, as we shall see, was often carried out with more diligence and enthusiasm under active service conditions than it was in Great Britain. A.B.C.A. was once described by the Adjutant-General to the Forces as the "education which the soldier carried with him into the Front Line". During operations in Africa, Italy, Burma and north-west Europe, the Adjutant-General's statement was substantiated on innumerable occasions.

A.B.C.A., too, had made progress with the A.T.S. By early 1944, the standard of discussion among auxiliaries had been considerably improved, due largely to the increasing interest shown by senior officers and to the fact that more

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vacancies were being allotted to A.T.S. officers at Coleg Harlech (see p. 174). Auxiliaries were now demanding a far wider range of subjects for their A.B.C.A. sessions and discussions were achieving more fruitful results. In order to overcome a widespread lack of confidence among A.T.S. platoon commanders, many short courses were run at group and company headquarters.

As the War progressed, several additions were made to the facilities provided by the A.B.C.A. directorate in order to help the regimental officer in preparing his A.B.C.A. talks and in promoting interest in current affairs. Not the least important of these was the A.B.C.A. map review. This consisted of a colourful poster-size map of the world on which items of current interest were clearly indicated. Background information to the news was supplied in the form of comprehensive marginal text-comment, illustrated, whenever possible, with photographs. On the reverse side of each issue there was a pictorial representation of some phase of international affairs, as well as a fair-sized outline map, later this side consisted of a bigger, specially drawn map of one of the main theatres of war. The first map review appeared in November 1942, and thereafter was issued fortnightly to every company of infantry (or equivalent unit) in the British Army, as well as several other fighting Services. All that needs to be said about A.B.C.A. map review is that, apart from questions of format, choice of subjects and of maps, nothing but the highest praise was given by the troops for a feature which did so much to keep them informed not only of the progress of the War but of the preparations for peace.

A further way in which the A.B.C.A. Directorate helped units with pictorial aids was by the issue of a series of attractively coloured posters which were designed to appeal to the eye and to focus attention on problems of international affairs and post-war reconstruction. Each set of posters told a story clearly and strikingly.

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Another unit activity which was stimulated by the introduction of A.B.C.A. was the wall newspaper. In contrast to the ordinary newspaper, the wall newspaper was essentially local, was written and produced by a fairly small social group, and reflected the life of the unit. The method of constructing the wall newspaper varied from group to group; the one generally used was the sticking of typed columns, cartoons, pictures and photographs, on to a sheet of paper, with headings, sub-titles and captions drawn in the appropriate places. In some cases this sheet of paper consisted of an ordinary newspaper, while, in bigger units, a more elaborate panel of wood or beaver-board, about 10 ft. long by 4 ft. wide, was constructed. One correspondent described the effectiveness of the unit wall newspaper as follows:

Here is an obvious but excellent medium for presenting factual knowledge in a palatable and attractive way. Articles on current affairs, scientific problems, popular geography, well illustrated, carefully laid out, and with arresting sub-headings, are read with pleasure, especially if written by an acquaintance of the reader. Remoteness and objectivity are diminished by the personal element. The wall newspaper of one Army unit presents an account of the soldier's experiences in, and sketches of, Syria; in another a soldier discusses his own and his unit's operational role in relation to the general strategy of the war. This personal, informal approach to knowledge is aided by a cross-fire of letters, questions and polemics.⁷

Each production became the property and responsibility of the social group for whom it catered. Troops who nursed to themselves their pet theories, grumbles, witticisms, now had at hand not only a medium for their expression but also an interested audience. Experience showed that, when provoked by some over-bold article or the tactful wheedling of the editor, even the less vocal individuals felt constrained to write and set forth their ideas. In one army unit, for example, over a period of six issues (one a week), about

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thirty-three men had contributed more than sixty articles, letters and drawings. Each issue carried a poem.

One week a poem was handed in on a tattered envelope [continued the correspondent quoted above]; spelling and punctuation were all wrong; the verses jumbled up and almost illegible. It turned out to be a beautiful simple statement of a soldier's faith in freedom and determination never to live in a conquered land.

But besides developing the creative attitude in the individual, the wall newspaper also helped to make the unit more conscious of itself and more self-critical. By presenting a picture of all sides and activities of the unit, it was able to bring even the most diverse group together in a spirit of goodwill. One wall newspaper, for example, promoted considerable discussion on the unit's military training and on ways of improving it; in another, food, sport and cigarette rationing were constructively criticised. The general effect of this freedom to write one's thought was adequately put by the correspondent previously quoted:

This freedom of criticism develops two important qualities. It makes for tolerance, and it brings out the sense of responsibility and self-discipline on the part of the contributors. An Army unit's paper which has been in existence two months has had to "vet" only one article for over-stepping the limit, the pillorying of individuals and argumentation, political and military, have proceeded in a spirit of moderation and tact.

It was not enough, however, merely to get men and women interested in their local news, and various devices were adopted to stimulate and satisfy interest in national and international events.* Generous issues of maps were made, and, when they were properly used, were put in convenient spots so that people passing to and fro could see them and,

* For a variety of reasons, troops, even those in Great Britain, soon lost touch with the news. Early in 1943 a sample investigation revealed that at least 50 per cent of the troops in Great Britain did not see a daily newspaper nor were able to listen to radio news.

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gradually, become familiar with the shape and layout of their own and other countries. This was soon improved upon by many units which began to 'tape the news'. Here the maps were fixed to the wall of a recreation room or canteen and under the maps was fixed a trestle table. Newspaper cuttings were pinned to the table and were renewed daily. From each cutting ran a piece of tape affixed (at the other end) to the spot on the map to which the particular news item referred. In practice it was found that there was no more economical or more vivid method of directing the men's attention to the more prominent items in the day's news.

Many of the methods for pictorialising A.B.C.A. which have been described depended for their efficacy on the place where they were assembled. In many of the largest units a separate room was set aside and was usually called the 'information room'. Its equipment depended on its size, as well as the availability of people responsible for its direction and maintenance. Usually the room was liberally provided with maps, magazines, time-tables, pictures, diagrams, charts, news-cuttings, wall newspapers, A.B.C.A. map reviews, books and pamphlets. In order to make a dramatic impact on any soldier or auxiliary who wandered in, the information room was generally placed in the charge of someone with an adequate sense of colour and display. By adroit placing of its attractions, it was hoped in each information room that any ordinary soldier who went in to consult a time-table would stay to learn something of international affairs. In smaller units, where it was difficult to set aside an entire room as an information room, 'A.B.C.A. corners' were set up in alcoves in N.A.A.F.I. canteens and other rooms. The value of these information rooms was reflected by the large amount of time and energy that was devoted to them. This in itself reflected the tremendous interest shown by the troops in the pictorial representation of international affairs. In many

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cases they became one of the unit show-places *

Other means by which the troops were encouraged to keep up with the news was developed, for example, in Northern Command. There, in different towns, Army Educational Corps personnel acquired the use of centrally situated shop-windows for the display of up-to-the-minute news, maps and pictures. At one such centre the news was featured twice daily on a blackboard surrounded by relevant maps and pictures of places and personalities. Books and pamphlets were prominently displayed, and a library of 1500 volumes was built up by local contributions. The daily regimental news-sheet, called *On the Target*, gave details of projected activities; the town's educational and social amenities were also prominently displayed.

In some units the device of 'taping the news' was consolidated by a short summary of the week's news delivered once a week to the men by a selected officer. Newspapers were always in short supply and so were private opportunities for reading them. It was, therefore, important that the men should be provided with convenient substitutes. With a large-scale map, an officer was able to do much in a fifteen-minutes session to provide his men with a coherent synopsis of current happenings.

Yet another way in which A.B.C.A. (and army education) helped to keep troops aware of current events was by the use of films. Informative films normally had a place in all recreational programmes displayed in army cinemas. The type of film which A.B.C.A. obtained were those dealing with current affairs and which had a strong appeal for their intrinsic interest and value. They were either made up of fiction based on fact, as, for example, *Nine Men*, or fact throughout, like the British official film *Desert Victory*,

* The changed attitude to army education after 2-3 years was indicated by one adjutant. At the beginning of the War, he said, the first demand made by senior inspecting officers was "Let me see your cook-house." After four years the demand was changed to "I'd like to see your information room."

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and the Russian film *One Day of War*. Besides these films dealing with topics of current importance, a number of films were also made for A.B.C.A. by the Ministry of Information, illustrating the principles of discussion-group leading.

In June 1944 an interesting new technique in presenting current problems was officially sponsored when the A.B.C.A. Play Unit was formed. Prior to this date, the London District Theatrical Company had experimented with a series of short plays, all directed towards the study and appreciation of current events. In a series of 'flashes', salient points were driven home to the audience with as much punch as wit and ingenuity could devise. The success of this venture led to further experiments and a 'misappropriated' company of soldiers and auxiliaries carried out a number of engagements in the London area. At each performance two short 'plays' were presented. One dealt with the break-down of the League of Nations and the lessons which might have been learned from Lincoln's struggles to hold together the American Union. The second 'play' consisted, within the framework of an A.B.C.A. discussion, of a dramatic interpretation of the German character, here the actors and audience became mixed up with each other in a way which tensely amplified the effectiveness of the performance. By this time the Group had passed the experimental stage and an establishment was sought to make it a permanent organisation under the A.B.C.A. Directorate. After some disturbing delays, the launching of the A.B.C.A. Play Unit was announced under the guidance of Major Michael Macowan, formerly one of London's younger and most distinguished theatrical producers.

The purpose of the Play Unit was twofold. One was to provide factual information in a form more easily assimilable than through the lecture or the pamphlet. The second was to stimulate profitable discussion by expressing on the stage some of the partially developed thoughts in the minds of the

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audience. In order to get these points over, the Play Unit realised it would have to present its material with a great deal of appreciable entertainment. There were many difficulties — each topic dealt with presented its own and had to be treated in a different way from others — but each 'play' was approached as a new experiment, and all pre-conceived ideas of presentation were discarded. Sometimes the technique was reminiscent of the film, sometimes of the feature broadcast, transporting the onlooker from London to Australia or Teheran without so much as dropping a curtain. In Major Macowan's words :

We have given the troops verse at two o'clock in the afternoon and heard them applaud it to the echo, we have made them leap in their seats with realistic dive-bombing and listen, hushed, to a Japanese cradle song. We are still learning, and, we hope, still shaking them.*

Many things, apart from problems inherent in the subjects, affected the productions. The Play Unit, consisting of thirteen soldiers and five A.T.S., many of them with names well known in the theatre like Stephen Murray and Andre van Ghyshegem, travelled about the country, playing one day in a garrison theatre with a well-equipped stage, good acoustics and convenient dressing-rooms, and the next day with their own fixtures in a Nissen hut, making hurried changes in cramped quarters. The Company had to do the work of stage hands, electricians, carpenters and furniture removers, as well as act; each script gained from the contributions and suggestions offered by any member of the Play Unit. To be effective, the productions themselves had to be not only well constructed and intelligently played, but carefully timed and superbly drilled.

Besides these activities of the Play Unit, an attempt was made to encourage the Army's interest in the theatre as a whole. Members of the Company, between performances, gave readings from great plays to illustrate the history of English drama, as well as lectures on the technique of acting

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and production. Courses for drama leaders were also taken by the Play Unit, when students were given practice in acting and production

Within six months, fifty-eight performances had been given to some twenty thousand troops from a repertoire of five plays. The General Secretary of the W.E.A. wrote that he was convinced that there is a definite place for this kind of dramatisation in adult education, provided that it is well done.⁹ Most educationists will agree with this pronouncement.

Besides the Play Unit, another dramatic feature was introduced by A.B.C.A., this time in collaboration with the Army Welfare Department. In 1943 Mr. J. B. Priestley presented a play, which he had specially written for the purpose, to the A.B.C.A. directorate. It was called *Desert Highway* and sought to make Service men and women face up to the fundamental issues for which they were fighting. In December 1943 the play began a lengthy tour of the larger garrison theatres and a certain number of public provincial theatres. Later, it ran for a season in the West End of London, before beginning further tours in the provinces. The play and the acting of the small army cast were enthusiastically received by civilians and the Services

Pursuing its policy of not neglecting any means of promoting interest in current problems, early in 1944 the A.B.C.A. Directorate published a *Song Book*. This book contained the words and tunes of some fifty songs which commemorate some notable event in British or American history. The selection of the songs was made by Captain Christopher Hassall of the Army Educational Corps, and the musical editing was done by Lieutenant (afterwards Captain) Eric Fenby, also of the Army Educational Corps. Within a short time of its issue, the A.B.C.A. *Song Book*, which was published at 1s. a copy, had been sold by the thousand, particularly to troops who had been overseas for some time. Apart from its value in community singing, the

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Song Book was widely used in units for promoting brief sing-songs before A B C.A. discussions.

The first year's working had shown the inadequacy of the arrangements for giving regimental officers practice in the leading of discussions. The need for a special school to deal with this matter became increasingly obvious, and in January 1943 the Adult Education Residential College at Harlech in North Wales was opened as an Army School of Education. Here courses were held regularly, both for commanding officers and regimental officers, and were devoted entirely to the aims, purposes and method of A.B.C.A.

Normally the courses were of about five days' duration, and the time divided between lectures on such topics as the preparation of material for a discussion period, demonstrations on the running of a discussion group and (what was particularly stressed) the practice of discussion leadership by the students under the guidance of a member of the staff. It was also usual to introduce, at each course, one or more visiting lecturers to speak on some topic of general or current interest.

Of the course itself, it might be said that those who went to Coleg Harlech in a friendly spirit usually left with enthusiasm, while those who approached the educational 'trap' with an attitude of suspicion and hostility were usually converted. Among army educationists it eventually became a commonplace that the change in attitude by many commanding officers towards education in their units was due very largely to the influence exerted by Coleg Harlech. Among the many visitors to Coleg Harlech was Mr. Ivor Brown, the editor of *The Observer*, who, in an article in that newspaper on May 14, 1944, described the work being done there as praiseworthy.

Far too much education in this country [he wrote] especially on the University and Adult level, has been based on the assumption that great learning makes a good lecturer. An undergraduate who got a first in June is considered ripe to be an

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instructor and to give lectures in October, without any training in the craft of teaching. Behind the A.B.C.A. School Course lie not only a first-rate staff but a carefully planned method for uniting, in the "period", freedom of viewpoint with reasonable control of the argument's course. Anarchic discussions are a sheer waste of time. To make the point clear and then keep to it is the job.¹⁰

Of course, these observations convey nothing new to the educationist. "To know what to teach certainly does not imply to know how to teach." This is taken for granted in elementary and secondary teaching, in that most teachers are expected to have been trained as teachers. But it does not hold for adult education, especially in the universities, and this explains why a first-class academic man on a university staff is sometimes almost useless as a lecturer and quite void of inspiration. Though the men and women in the Army who attend the various activities connected with army education are rather different from whole-time university students, the general principles of adult education inherent in both are very similar. And here the army education authorities are to be congratulated in having not only launched the biggest experiment in adult education in the history of the country, but also in being among the first to recognise the essential need for training their adult educators in the science and art of adult education.

It must not be imagined that A.B.C.A. proceeded without trials and difficulties. The fear, expressed by Sir James Grigg, that it might become too political was always present, and on several occasions civilian lecturers to the Forces were politely informed that their services were no longer required. Although official reasons for these drastic steps were never given, it was usually accepted that the lecturers had gone too far in preaching a particular party doctrine. On several of the occasions when transgressing lecturers had had their permits cancelled, storms of protest arose among various political groups. These protests were usually more noisy

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than effective, however, and, on the whole, the troops agreed that when civilian lecturers indulged in party politics, whether by direct statement or by an untoward inflexion of the voice or lifting of an eyebrow, they were abusing a privilege.

One storm did arise, however, which for a while had all the appearance of a whirlwind. In November 1942 the eagerly awaited report of Sir William Beveridge on "Social Security" was issued as a White Paper¹¹ Knowing the tremendous interest that the troops were taking in this subject, the enterprising Director of A.B.C.A. approached Sir William and persuaded him to write his report in popular language so that it could be published as an A.B.C.A. bulletin. This Sir William did, and on December 19, 1942, the fortnightly number of *Current Affairs* was issued to regimental officers in the usual way. Within a few days a hasty teleprint message was sent round to all units ordering these copies to be called in and returned to the War Office. Then the storm broke. On January 19, 1943, certain members of Parliament attacked the Secretary of State for War for withdrawing the bulletin and for not allowing the Army to carry out free discussion on the Beveridge Report. Sir James Grigg admitted that he had been responsible for calling in the bulletin; but declared that, not only was it untrue to say that he had forbidden discussion on the Beveridge Report but also that "Command Education authorities are being encouraged to provide lecturers on the subject by qualified lecturers, both military and civilian, under the ordinary Army Education Scheme".¹² The withdrawal of the bulletin was explained by Sir James in the following way: "When, then, I was shown an issue of *Current Affairs*, containing besides an official brief, a summary of the Beveridge Report written by the author himself, I took the view that compulsory discussion of this subject in the Army ought to be postponed until there had been at any rate a preliminary debate in this House on that subject". While it would be untrue to say that

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this reply led to a hushing of the storm, within a short time the wind had blown itself out, and A.B.C.A. went on its way with renewed vigour.

A tremendous fillip was given to the A.B.C.A. bulletins in June 1944 when *War* staff writers were allowed to cover a campaign at first hand. A staff writer took part in one of the assault flights over France on D-Day and was able to write a comprehensive account of the atmosphere on one particular beach. Afterwards, the whole north-west Europe campaign was covered, one *War* staff writer being severely wounded and reported missing in the epic of Arnhem.*

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* Perhaps even this privilege of covering a campaign was not the height of A.B.C.A.'s achievements. Its peak seems to have been reached when the celebrated Mr. Tommy Handley included a five-minute A.B.C.A. in one of his amusing broadcast I.T.M.A. programmes, but A.B.C.A. sunk to the depths when a Hampshire paper reported that a patient "was admitted to the Royal Portsmouth Hospital suffering from discussion."

Chapter Ten

Correspondence Courses

THE introduction of correspondence courses to meet the demands of the more 'serious' students who could not be satisfied in any other way, and of troops who were constantly on the move, had been anticipated by the Haining Committee in 1940 (see p. 104). Even before the report was issued a correspondence scheme of a limited nature had been developed by the regional committees. In Southern Command, for example, units were advised that "arrangements can be made in special cases for soldiers to be put in touch with tutors employed by Regional Committees . . . who will help to supervise their studies by correspondence, and, if possible, occasional interviews" ¹ This was taken up by a few units, although it had not got very far when the Haining report was published.

Later, an Army Council instruction was issued stating that correspondence courses in certain vocational subjects were being arranged in conjunction with various professional bodies ² The courses available were banking, engineering (civil, electrical and mechanical), insurance and law; and it was stated that others would be ready in a short time. All courses were open to army men and women of all ranks in Great Britain. Since the cost of providing such courses was considerable, and, also, to ensure that the applicant was a genuine student, the latter was required to pay an enrolment fee of 10s. No further fee was payable, notwithstanding the number of courses taken. In view of the fact that some of these courses cost £10 10s. and upwards in peace-time, not many soldiers grumbled at the charge. If the applicant

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could not obtain the text-books he required on loan or through a public library, the Army Educational Corps officer in his area purchased the book and lent it to him until he had completed the course

The troops' response to the official vocational correspondence course scheme was immediate and gratifying. Owing to unforeseen delay in the preparation of the syllabuses, however, it was not found practicable to start enrolling students until the beginning of February 1941. The Army Council Instruction³ which gave this information also stated that other courses had been provided for persons studying for the Chartered Surveyors' Institution, the Auctioneers' and Estate Agents' Institute, the Land Agents Society, or the B.Sc degree in Estate Management of the University of London. Afterwards, at various intervals, vocational correspondence courses for other professions were announced, together with a statement about what had been one of the weaknesses of the scheme — the procuring of text-books. Arrangements were made whereby all text-books would be supplied direct to units for loan to enrolled students from the Services Central Book Depot at Finsbury Barracks.⁴ It is interesting to notice that in one subject alone, namely, insurance, the responsibility for the conduct of the scheme was delegated to a professional body, the Chartered Insurance Institute. No distinction was made as to whether or not a student was engaged in insurance in civil life or intended to follow this occupation after the War, or whether a student was a member of the Institute.

That the vocational correspondence courses met a real demand was certain. But their standard was high and the narrow choice was bound to limit the number of applicants. Many soldiers who wished to improve their general education by means of a correspondence course were therefore disappointed with the vocational correspondence course scheme. It was no surprise, therefore, when a few months later, postal study courses were introduced in general subjects. By means

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of these postal study courses, students could be taken from an elementary stage up to the intermediate standard of a university degree (and even beyond) in well over forty subjects. These included advertising, biochemistry for students of brewing, the French Army interpreters' qualifying examinations and esperanto, as well as the usual academic subjects found in school and college curricula. Arrangements for taking these courses were the same as for the vocational correspondence courses. Despite the obvious failing that correspondence courses could still not be taken by Forces overseas — where they were frequently most required — there can be little doubt that the scheme was already a great success. Some indication of this may be gleaned from the following: by August 1942 some 16,788 students had enrolled for vocational correspondence courses and 7309 for postal study courses. That there were more applications for the former than the latter was due to the variation in dates of introduction. As time went on, there were proportionately many more applications for postal study courses.

An important announcement came in October 1942, when it was stated that the scheme had been extended to troops in Gibraltar, Iceland and West Africa.⁵ Unfortunately, it was still impossible to introduce the scheme in other overseas theatres where British soldiers were serving. Where a student who was taking a correspondence course in Britain was posted to a theatre where the scheme did not apply, he was given the option of cancelling his enrolment or allowing it to remain in suspense. In the latter case, it was open to the student, at any time during hostilities, or within six months thereafter, to apply for reinstatement without further payment.

During the next few years the story of the War Office correspondence course scheme was one of extraordinary growth. New classes were continually being added to the list and by April, 1944, some twenty-seven vocational corre-

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spendence courses and a hundred and twenty postal study courses were available on application. These included a very wide range of subjects varying from vocational courses in grocery and teachers' training to Diesel engines and investment principles and stock exchange practice in postal study courses.⁶ Gradually the difficulty of keeping the courses going when troops were posted abroad was overcome, and, as soon as supply problems were solved, the scheme was introduced to every theatre of operations. Thus, while Twenty-first Army Group troops were preparing for the invasion of Europe, it was announced, in April 1944, that soldiers who wished would not be debarred from continuing any course they had started. In September 1944 it was notified that the scheme had been extended to the Central Mediterranean Forces (North Africa, Sicily and Italy), and within six weeks some three thousand applications had been received at the War Office from this theatre. On October 6, 1944, General Order 1101 of 1944 confirmed that all troops serving in the Middle East could also take advantage of the scheme and applications quickly began to pour into the War Office. The significance of air transport was well brought out in these two theatres and all the courses, as well as the text-books, were carried in both directions by air. The rapid communication between the soldier-student and his tutor was of immense value in maintaining the interest of the former, and, perhaps, the latter too. A further announcement in November 1944 stated that British troops in India and South East Asia Command could also take part in the correspondence course scheme, and within a few weeks the first supply of books and courses was despatched to these commands. Malta was included in the scheme in December 1944.

That the War Office had adopted the right policy in developing these correspondence courses for more serious students was reflected by some figures published towards the end of 1943. From the start of the scheme on January 1,

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1941, until September 1, 1943, the enrolments were as follows

	Army	A T.S.	Navy	R A F	Total
Part 1 (Vocational) Courses	24,662	282	2,997	10,526	38,467
Part 2 (Postal Study) Courses	19,037	1,643	2,717	8,386	31,783
Total	43,699	1,925	5,714	18,912	70,250

The extension of the scheme to theatres overseas naturally resulted in a considerable increase in the total number of applications. In the first eleven months of 1944, for example, seventy thousand applications were received at the War Office of which more than twenty-eight thousand were received in the months of October and November. This increase was so enormous and rapid that the particular War Office department concerned was strained almost to breaking point in dealing with the applications. To prevent the whole organisation collapsing, it was agreed in December 1944 that a quota system would have to be arranged for members of Twenty-first Army Group and home commands, although hospital patients were to continue to get preferential treatment. Stimulation to the success of the scheme came in March 1945, when it was stated that the despatch of study notes and text-books to the overseas theatres had been undertaken by the Services Central Book Depot at Finsbury Park.

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Chapter Eleven

Handicrafts

FROM the early days of the army educational scheme, it was expected that the greater proportion of men who would be likely to respond to any educational provision would be reached through the medium of lectures and talks. But there was a large number that was uninterested in verbal education, and wished to be doing something with their hands.

At first, it seemed that it would be almost impossible to provide any facilities for them; this was certainly the opinion of the Haining Committee which had reported: "Those must not be forgotten whose minds work through their hands and who find mental relaxation in hobbies and crafts, although to cater for them will often present almost insuperable difficulties". Some seven months later, the army authorities still regarded the provision of educational equipment for hobbies and handicrafts, on an official basis, as an impossible task. In the first series of "Notes for the Guidance of Unit Education Officers (Home)", 1941,¹ the emphasis still lay on the side of lectures and discussions, and no specific reference was made to the encouragement of classes in handicrafts. If a soldier wished to pursue some manual subject, he was recommended to take a class at the nearest technical institution. This, as we have seen, had disadvantages, which made it difficult, sometimes, for the soldier to attend regularly and punctually. Fortunately the Army has its own way of dealing with difficulties — words like 'scrounge', 'lift' and 'beg' have a connotation for the soldier which civilians have difficulty in understanding and, as with many other educational activities, small groups of

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men began to develop their own arrangements for continuing their hobby or craft or for learning a new one. The enthusiasm of these groups infected other men, who started similar work. Soon, enough was being done to convince the authorities at the War Office that an official scheme would have to be introduced. This was gradually developed, and, today, stands as one of the great achievements of the army educational scheme

Beside the fact that many men expressed themselves more easily with materials than with words, there were several reasons why handicrafts were bound to play a large part in any educational work carried out by the Armed Forces. Some men were attracted by the possibility of making a little money, or, at least, saving a little expenditure, by acquiring some domestic craft which could be put to good use after the War. Other men wanted to know how to make presents for their friends or objects of beauty or use for their own homes. Then there were the tradesmen who were glad to practise any craft which would help them 'to keep their eye in' at their job. For these, and other reasons, it was inevitable that a big demand for handicrafts would arise, and would be limited only by the lack of materials and tools

One of the first measures taken to meet the demand was made through the National Council of Social Service. By arrangements made with the regional committees, this organisation placed part of the time of their craft instructors at the disposal of Anti-Aircraft Command. The National Council of Social Service had first embarked on handicrafts in the 'Distressed Areas' during the years of unemployment that preceded the War. The purpose of their work was not primarily a way of providing profitable employment, but of affording mental recreation that would help to rebuild a man's mind and body. In some ways, the position of some men in the Army resembled that of unemployed miners or shipwrights for whom the National Council had developed its handicrafts scheme. Many hundreds of soldiers were serving

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in small detachments, in lonely places and in uncongenial surroundings. They were tied by duty to their cheerless sites with no immediate call for action. It was a good moment for the Army when the National Council of Social Service agreed to help by allowing their instructors to take groups of soldiers in various crafts. In a memorandum which they produced called *The Place of Handicrafts in a Scheme of Army Education*, the Council declared that their aim "was to break down boredom and apathy, to build up a sense of achievement in the individual, and to inculcate the value of spontaneous co-operation by a group in work which no individual could achieve on his own".

The kind of work that was done was described by Colonel K. N. Colville, of the Army Educational Corps, who saw much of it in progress :

The instructors already employed under the National Council of Social Service [he wrote] have been used, at first, since it was there that they were to be found, in the one-time depressed or "special" areas. These have worked sometimes singly, sometimes in small teams, moving from site to site and opening up fresh ground as opportunity afforded. Every instructor offers a choice of crafts and men are encouraged to try their eye and hand on whichever they fancied. Some pupils will move from one to another before settling down to make something. They may proceed at once to some creative work, without being given any preliminary grind in the "grammar" of the chosen craft. Show a man the materials and the tools and set him to it. The instructor moves from group to group, correcting, explaining, suggesting, as occasion requires. Here is a man making a box ; here another re-upholstering a chair ; yet another is weaving a gay many-coloured scarf. Over there you will see an odd sight, a brawny gunner studying intently a roughly carved block of stone. The observer may be forgiven if he is not sure what the stone is to represent. The sculptor has not yet quite decided. The stone is a natural block picked up from a local quarry or beach, and the gunner is the kin of Michelangelo (though he could not spell the name), seeking to discover what lies imprisoned in his block. When he has an inkling of that he will seek to release the prisoner.

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Elsewhere you may see men, or women of the A.T.S., weaving raffia, making gloves, modelling clay or lettering a notice-board. Toy-making, too, whether in some soft material for the baby, whom the father has scarcely seen, or a jointed affair in wood for the older child, is a popular occupation, particularly a little before Christmas. Probably in few cases is their skill very great for these are early days yet, but the product, touched up by the instructor, will already prove acceptable, and in every group I have visited I have been impressed by the interest the work has for the worker, his absorption in his own vision and in the patient progress towards giving concrete shape to the vision.²

But the National Council of Social Service instructors were few in number and could not be expected to satisfy more than a small fraction of the demand. The local education authorities had given considerable help by providing instructors who took classes in units, and by allowing soldier-students to attend classes in the technical institutes, usually free of charge. This was still not enough, however, and again the Army saw that it would have to develop its own educational resources. In some cases, craft instructors of proved ability came forward; but these were few in number, and it was seen that methods of selecting and training potential instructors would have to be adopted. Centres were set up where men, including Army Educational Corps instructors, were given hints in the teaching of branches of handicraft like light metal-work, wood-work, hand-weaving and book-binding. It was, of course, realised that it was virtually impossible to train competent instructors in specialised crafts in short courses; but it was hoped that these 'leaders' would pick up enough to be able to organise informal classes and interest their fellow workers. So far as possible, the instructors from the centres visited the 'leaders' from time to time to give advice, and, incidentally, expert instruction to the students in the classes.

One of the great difficulties was the supply of equipment. Although authority had been given for the necessary tools

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and materials, the tools were frequently received weeks and even months after they had been asked for by a unit, with the result that, even if the persons who wanted to join the class still remained, enthusiasm would have dwindled and would have to be re-kindled. From the beginning of the work, the supply of materials had presented formidable problems. As the number of classes grew, so the amount of material diminished under a total war economy. Often, as local stocks of material became exhausted, crafts had to be abandoned altogether. Yet as fast as one supply of materials disappeared, so others were found ; as materials for one craft vanished, so another was started. It was a tribute to the spirit of improvisation and experiment that characterised the whole army scheme that the number of handicraft classes continued to increase all through the War.

An indication of the rate of growth of handicraft classes may be taken from the reports of the Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces for the six-monthly periods ending September 1941 and September 1942. The first of these reports stated that thirty-four single talks on various crafts had been given by civilian lecturers, while eighty classes had also been held. The report for the succeeding year showed that these figures had increased to 176 and 272 respectively. Previously, the Central Advisory Council had appointed a full-time handicrafts adviser (Mr. G. A. Stevens, who was seconded from the National Council of Social Service), and, undoubtedly, his visits to units had been much appreciated and had encouraged the formation of classes. Mr. Stevens' visits were supplemented by cases of demonstration models which he had devised and which were made full use of by units.

The military reports amply confirmed the experiences of the Central Advisory Council. By November 1941 the command education officer in the Northern Command was able to write that the biggest demand in organised classes was for handicrafts, although the shortage of materials was

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constantly upsetting arrangements for meeting the demand. In the preceding three months, twenty-four courses for handicraft instructors had been arranged, as well as courses for A.T.S. representatives who were trained as instructors in the making of soft toys. Classes were being held which ranged from glove-making, wood-carving, French polishing, 'Perspex' and other plastics work, weaving, pottery-making, hairdressing and sculpturing. Taking Great Britain as a whole, the number of handicraft classes organised for soldiers and auxiliaries alone during June, July and August 1942 was nearly three thousand. Handicraft centres had been set up in many units, and often these were open for long periods when the men could go in and out as they pleased. One such centre, for example, was open all day on Sunday and was well patronised throughout the day.

The keenness of the students in some cases was surprising, and one serjeant stands out for conspicuous initiative. He had been a regular member of a hobbies centre at York which had been open for about a year. One night the instructor was surprised to find that a dining-table had arrived at the centre. It had been brought from London by the serjeant on returning from leave. One leg of the table was broken and the instructor was blandly told that the serjeant wished to repair it before taking it back when next he went on leave. Fitting the table into the small hobbies room was a difficult matter, but it was managed in and when the serjeant's wife next saw her husband the table was repaired. This particular hobbies centre was opened in October 1942, and, apart from short breaks at holiday times, continued to offer facilities to men who wished to pursue various hobbies in wood, metal or leather for three evenings a week.

The success of this centre raised an important point about the attendance of soldiers at technical institutes. Despite a great deal of publicity informing the men and women about the excellent facilities for handicrafts to be found in the technical institutions, it was difficult to persuade soldiers

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and auxiliaries to attend. Yet if a unit itself opened a 'handicrafts' room, no matter how cramped the accommodation, how few the tools, and how little the choice of materials, men who had never been inside any educational institution since leaving school would flock in and remain as enthusiastic members. This was clearly brought out by one centre which catered for all troops who cared to attend in a certain garrison town. The instructors were civilians. To attend the centre many of the men had to walk from the other side of the town, but one never heard murmurs about that. What made the situation surprising was that attempts to get men to join classes at the local technical college, where the principal was extremely friendly and anxious to meet any demand of the troops, were usually not successful. This was true both before the opening of the hobbies centre and after. Many reasons were put forward by the serving men and women to explain why they did not wish to become members of the civilian institutes, while other reasons were adduced by the Army Educational Corps representatives and the civilian instructors. At the bottom of all the reasons was the fear that the men and women had of returning to another kind of school where they would be treated like school children and where, for many of them, the humiliation of their school days would be repeated. However wrong they were in their judgment, the attitude of these men and women was a sad comment on the kind of education that had been provided for them in their school days. It was also an indication of the kind of problem that army education had to face and which adult education will have to face in future years unless a greater love for education as a continuous process can be instilled in young people's minds before they leave school.

By the end of 1942 the demand for handicrafts was going up by leaps and bounds. The military report for the three months September, October and November showed that 5299 handicraft classes had been arranged in home commands, an increase of 80 per cent over the previous quarter. Tools

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and materials continued to present considerable difficulties of supply and each command and unit adopted its own methods for supplementing the limited supplies that were obtainable through the 'usual channels'. Scottish Command, for example, was fortunate in being able to borrow a large number of tools from the Scottish Council for Community Service. There was also continual difficulty in securing instructors to cope with the ever-increasing demands and one regional committee offered a partial solution of this problem by appointing a full-time instructor for work in Anti-Aircraft Command.

Generally, however, although a tremendous amount of energy was being expended on handicraft classes, the quality of the work was not high, and, in many cases, the handicrafts classes deteriorated into 'mass production' centres for leather bags, oilcloth elephants and other 'useful' articles. To combat this, constant efforts to raise the standard of work were made by the regional committees, representatives of the local education authorities, and by members of the Army Educational Corps. One noteworthy example of this was a series of courses held in South-Eastern Command under the auspices of the Kent Education Committee. Here the men were taught to draw, not in the pictorial sense, but as a method of recording on paper information and intentions in a concise and accurate manner. Simple preliminary exercises were carried out to demonstrate the correct use of tools and to impart knowledge of materials and their characteristics. Design was made a running theme throughout the course, although, at constant intervals, particular attention was focussed on planning and design. All the work carried out was entirely original, and students were encouraged to make articles to meet some requirements of their unit or home life.

In another command a survey of all the handicraft work was undertaken in order to transform what for many was a pastime into an appreciation of craftsmanship with perception of quality and design and understanding of materials

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and tools. Here the plan was, first, to improve the handicrafts instructors as teachers and imbue them with a real appreciation for the work. The instructors met regularly to discuss methods and exchange experiences and ideas. Further, one-day district schools were arranged to serve as 'refresher' courses for existing teachers and to assist potential teachers and interested 'handy' men to become crafts leaders. The result of this survey was a considerable increase in the quality of the work being done throughout the command; and as the instructors acquired standing in the units, their attempts to discourage crafts which had a tendency to become purely mechanical operations achieved a fair amount of success.

Gradually the quality of the work in all the home commands was raised. This was largely due to courses like the one described above and to the policy of the regional committees in appointing, to their full-time staffs, handicrafts experts whose duty it was to organise work and advise units about the best methods of conducting classes. By March 1944 eight regional committees had appointed handicrafts organisers. The Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces helped directly in promoting good standards of design by sending out to units cases of demonstration models which had been specially prepared by its adviser on handicrafts, Mr. G. A. Stevens. These, as we have previously remarked, were greatly appreciated in units, and, in some cases, were duplicated by local effort.

Among the ways in which interest in handicrafts was promoted was the holding of exhibitions. These were organised either directly by members of the Army Educational Corps or jointly by the regional committees and the Army Educational Corps with the Y.M.C.A. playing an active part in collaboration, or, sometimes, entirely by the latter organisation. Some of these exhibitions were of a modest nature, but others reached proportions that could only be compared with some of the peace-time Eisteddfods

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of Wales. Early in 1943, one district organised an exhibition of six hundred entries which was visited by more than five thousand people. The success of this venture led the same district to organise another exhibition in conjunction with the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Anti-Aircraft Command and branches of the Women's Services. In 1944, many of these competitions and exhibitions were arranged to support the 'Salute the Soldier' Weeks which had been organised by local savings committees as part of the National Savings campaign. The volume of handicrafts carried on in one area was indicated by the fact that nearly £750 (which was given to charities) was raised by the sale of articles displayed at a 'Salute the Soldier' exhibition.

The actual crafts practised varied enormously from district to district and, taking the Army as a whole, it would be difficult to name one craft which was not being attempted somewhere or another. An idea of the range and relative popularity of the crafts, in percentages, may be seen from the following table which represents the crafts being carried on in one district at the end of 1944 :

Leather-work	28.00	Felt-work	1.42
Wood-work	18.40	Basketry	1.42
Soft toys	14.10	Lino-cuts	0.95
Embroidery	9.50	Weaving	0.95
Macramé	8.30	Book-binding	0.47
Rug-making	6.62	Printing	0.47
Plastics	6.12	Fret-work	0.47
Metal-work	2.35	Raffia-work	0.47

Other reports suggested that wood-work was usually more popular than leather-work and that more metal-work would have been performed if a greater supply of tools and materials had been available.

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Chapter Twelve

Music, Art and Drama

THE place of the 'arts' in the war-time scheme of army education was one of peculiar interest. Before the First World War, adult education had been almost exclusively either academic or vocational. "On the one hand", wrote Captain (afterwards Colonel) N. G. Fisher, "was belief in education as culture, as a privilege acquired in youth by the wealthy, but not beyond reach of others who were prepared to make sacrifices for it" ¹ by diligent attendance at night schools. "On the other hand", in Captain Fisher's words, "was the belief in education as a means to an end; as a guarantee of a place at the top of the firm, or at least, of another 6d an hour." ¹ But the evils of urbanisation which began during the latter part of the eighteenth century had thrown up a new problem and a new challenge to society and, since the First World War, there has been a different approach to adult education as a means of meeting this challenge. Children leaving school at fourteen need not only the opportunity to continue their formal education, but also facilities for recreation, and for physical and social training throughout adolescence. This urgent necessity has been realised and has been tackled both by the voluntary youth organisations and by the State acting through the local education authorities. In the same way, the scope of education for adults has been widened. Instead of culture for the few and vocational education for those whose only interest has been that of 'getting on', it has been accepted that adult education can be a universal system, providing for all levels of intelligence and attainment. In that universal system, the 'arts'

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have a transcendently important place and have developed at a rapid rate in civil adult education schemes between the First and Second World Wars. The following account will be concerned with the contributions made by music, art and drama, in the upsurge of culture which was such a remarkable development in the Second World War.

MUSIC

In a broadcast talk in October 1942, the late Sir Henry Wood said that the revival in orchestral music in Britain since the outbreak of war represented the climax of his long career. During the same broadcast, Warrant Officer (afterwards Captain) Eric Fenby, himself one of our distinguished younger musicians, remarked that had anyone suggested to him three years previously that the War would bring about a great awakening in music and that the Services would play a vital, though happily, unconscious part, he would have been most sceptical.² By the end of 1942, however, many observers were able to say that the desire to understand the finer types of music were far greater than the efforts that were being made to satisfy it.

The problem of providing music for the Forces was largely that of converting those who had not realised their wants ; for the small minority whose wants were clear it was not so difficult to cater, and, in many cases, they greatly contributed to providing for the large group that needed to be converted. It was seen that this eternal problem of persuading the uninitiated could be done either through encouraging people to take part in some form of musical activity or by giving them advice and information on the appreciation of great music. Of ' activity ', little need be said. Choirs, glee clubs, and madrigal groups all made use of the human voice. Some of the choirs, like one Royal Army Pay Corps male voice choir, for example, achieved

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considerable prominence and were invited to broadcast on numerous occasions. Another Forces choir (mixed) of a hundred voices gave several public performances in the city of York, performing works like Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *St John Passion* to appreciative audiences. Similar choirs in other parts of the country undertook equally ambitious works with a tolerable amount of success. On the orchestral side, very valuable work was done. A unit regimental band often provided a beginning for instrumental classes, while efforts of wood-work enthusiasts not infrequently were the means whereby pipe and recorder orchestras came into being. Where the unit wanted a military band, they were invited to follow — as many did — the method described by Eric Fenby

Ask your adjutant to call a parade of Salvation Army men. These enthusiasts are always happy to send home for their own instruments and "have a blow". There is usually someone capable of conducting and the P.R.I. [President of the Regimental Institute] can be persuaded to buy the music. Here you are dealing with brass-band men, very few of whom can read other than the treble clef. So order brass-band arrangements of your marches, and if there are any clarinets they can play from cornet parts, and the inevitable saxophone from tenor-horn or baritone parts.²

In certain commands, some of the small orchestras grew until they had reached full 'symphony' proportions. In Western Command, for example, some much-appreciated concerts of excellent quality were given by the Western Command Symphony Orchestra in Chester Cathedral. Northern Command had two orchestras within its boundaries — the Northern Command Orchestra, which, after brilliant public performances under its conductor, Richard Austin, formerly conductor of the Bournemouth Municipal Orchestra, had to be abandoned owing to frequent postings of the members, and the Catterick Symphony Orchestra, which was formed in 1941.

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This orchestra [it was written] had the advantage of being formed from military bands, with the result that its members were more accessible and less subject to movement and, from the very first, was an enormous success. Whenever it appeared, and it did so only to the garrison forces, the theatre was sold out and many were turned away. The most ambitious venture was a week's music festival, consisting of four orchestral concerts, two piano recitals and an operatic evening. This was held in January of this year, and nearly broke all records for the Garrison Theatre, convincing all those who had worked for it that this kind of entertainment was most welcome.³

Symphony orchestras were formed in other commands, but usually the difficulty of keeping the instrumentalists together was too great and they had to be abandoned

In considering the means whereby the appreciation of good music was fostered, mention must be made of the valuable work done by E.N.S.A. Indeed, were it not for E.N.S.A., it is doubtful if any musical activities could have taken place during the early part of the War. To stimulate interest in music, and to cater as far as possible for the demand, special music departments were set up by E.N.S.A. at each command headquarters. Each department was placed in the charge of a music adviser, usually musicians of proved worth like Richard Austin and Boyd Neel, whose task it was to co-operate with Service education and entertainment officers in providing good music for the Forces. These advisers did valuable work both in the provision of 'live' and of recorded music. They gave much support in arranging concerts by Service orchestras and string quartets, recitals by famous soloists, performances by military bands, as well as by providing special concerts in which small groups of five or six artistes toured units of various kinds. It must not be thought that these small groups consisted of enthusiastic but musically misfiring amateurs; they were either professionals or amateurs of repute. Similar performances for the Forces were occasionally arranged by C.E.M.A.,

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although this body was mainly concerned with civilians. The only drawback to these 'live' concerts was that the supply fell pitifully short of the demand.

Another way in which the soldier's interest in music was given opportunities for expression was the 'music host' system. By arrangement with many civilians, members of the Services were invited to their homes to take part in musical activities of various kinds.

Recorded music circles were found in most units. A typical one was begun in one garrison town in January 1942, and met every Sunday night until August 1944, without a break, despite the fact that the members were constantly changing owing to continual troop movements. They were able to draw upon a large and representative library of gramophone records which E.N.S.A. had provided. The demand on the E.N.S.A. library was always very great, and eventually the Army was forced to supplement E.N.S.A. stocks by developing gramophone record libraries in each district. Gramophones were also supplied by the Army and, on a lesser scale, owing to supply difficulties, radiograms. The part played by E.N.S.A. was indicated by the music adviser to Northern Command in the article referred to which was written in December 1943.

Some figures showing the growth of these activities may be of some interest. During the last two months of 1941, six concerts were given, while during the following year fifty-eight concerts took place — an average of five per month. But in the first four months of 1943, sixty-two concerts have taken place — an average of fifteen per month. The increase is noticeable and it should be pointed out that concerts go only to those who wish for them. The average attendance, over a period of eighteen months, was two hundred per concert.

The Gramophone Clubs show the same encouraging increase, for whereas thirteen clubs were receiving records in February 1942, in the same month, one year later, one hundred and ninety clubs were served. The programme ranges from symphonies and operas to Strauss waltzes, popular ballads and negro spirituals,

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and the clubs always choose their own types. Seventy per cent of the requests are for symphonic music

Besides the gramophone concerts, and in addition to them, full-time lecturers on music were provided by the Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces. The lecturers went round to music groups who wished to extend their knowledge and appreciation of music, and gave illustrated talks and demonstrations and also acted as discussion leaders on varying aspects of music. It was unfortunate that there were so few of these in relation to the number of units that would have liked to have benefited from them. These lecturers exercised considerable ingenuity in overcoming the prejudices against music that were held by so many of the people with whom they had to deal. Two of them, Dobson and Young, became household names as a result of some broadcasts that were made of their performances to recruits of a naval training centre. The Dobson and Young technique excited much favourable comment in newspapers and journals — the *Picture Post* and the *News Chronicle* published long illustrated articles about them — although many professional adult educationists looked with scorn upon the light-hearted way that this 'infamous' pair approached the problem of extending the appreciation of good music. Some of the strictures of the scornful arose because they were unfamiliar with what Dobson and Young were trying to do, partly, perhaps, because Dobson and Young often gave the impression that they were doing more than they seemed really capable of doing.

Since the controversy that ranged round this pair ranged equally round the new approach to adult education which was being attempted by so many army educationists, it may be profitable to consider their work in some detail. A fair account of their work was written in *Adult Education* by a correspondent who called himself "An Observer with the Forces", and from him we can get a good picture of what many people were saying and feeling about Dobson and Young.

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Messrs. Dobson and Young were employed by the Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces as full-time lecturers on music for the Manchester University Regional Committee. Through their lectures, called "Music with a Smile", they were soon well known to thousands of service men and women throughout Great Britain; they became known to many civilians through a series of broadcasts in the autumn of 1944, which were the subject of much discussion at the time. Their lectures consisted of a graded series, lasting for eight meetings and sometimes for twenty meetings, covering the general aspects of music appreciation necessary for intelligent enjoyment. The "Observer" described them as follows:

Dobson talks with a formal informality which is quite his own, with stretches of broad slangy humour, much gesticulation and mimicry, and passages of simple, warm and sincere feeling. Young works the apparatus with unerring calm — if two bars are wanted from a symphony, the right two bars float in just as Dobson's voice stops, the volume rises and falls, the melody stops and starts, without a sign or comment. Nothing has ever been known to go wrong. Everything from beginning to end is exactly calculated, every effect is planned — yet whether you like it or not you would never think so. . . . Dobson's is the intimate knowledge of music . . . Young's is the technical command of the reproduction machinery, but to both of them belong the uncanny awareness of the audience, of every individual in it, and the exact psychological forethought. No lecturer ever thought more carefully about the nature of his audiences; no chairman at D. and Y.'s lectures ever knows what has been going on in the auditorium half so well as D. and Y. do by the time they have finished. And out of what they notice their lectures are built up towards an ever remote perfection.⁴

The correspondent then raised the important point — Could one say that the D. and Y. technique was adult education? His answer was unequivocal:

To me the question is incredibly stupid. You might as well ask if a loaf of bread is food. People are always talking of standards.

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What are they? What are the requirements of the Adult Educationist *par sang*? The lecturer must have a wide, exact and serious knowledge of his subject — Dobson has it (that is of music as a living art — he is shaky on its historical development and background . . .). He must be able to present it with clarity and vigour — who ever had more of these desirable characteristics? He must rouse people's minds to thought as well as instructing them — the discussions after D. and Y.'s lectures are as lively as in the best tutorial classes. There must be continuity and progress — D. and Y. always want to go on until circumstances stop them. The audience must be voluntary, coming to the subject of their free choice — Service authorities often parade people for D. and Y. as they do for others, but they only need to do it once — we should be glad if audiences would volunteer for D. and Y. a little less insistently. There should be collaboration on the part of the audience — there is, in a dozen ways, and if the Services required written work I haven't the slightest doubt that they would volunteer for that too. And the student should end with a fuller and deeper understanding of the subject than he had before — and so he unmistakably does. The fact is that not only are D. and Y. "adult education", but the most astonishingly successful thing I have ever seen in adult education.

Not all reacted to Dobson and Young in the same way. One experienced lecturer said that they had said in half an hour what she had been trying to say for thirty years. The head of a university music department heard them and called them geniuses — no one else should be asked to give appreciation talks if they were available. A celebrated conductor heard them and said that they made him wonder whether he knew anything about music at all. Officers of the Army Educational Corps eagerly sought their help on 'courses', and one of the more discriminating said, "This is what we have been waiting for . . . an educational missionary." People who had to organise educational activities for the uninstructed wrote daily asking them to visit factory canteens, men's clubs, hospitals and so forth. On the other hand, a young A.T.S. officer called their

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introductory talk "blasphemy"; professional tutors in adult education tended to say "Good music-hall, but why call it adult education?" And a prominent administrator described all their doings as "mere antics".

The truth about Dobson and Young was that, as an ice-breaking team for introducing good music to the uninitiated, they had no peer. Their real weakness lay in the point already referred to by "An Observer with the Forces", namely, Dobson's limited knowledge of the historical development and background of music. But there could be little doubt that by their novel approach they had opened up new fields in adult education which previously had remained untilled because of the adult educationist's insistence on the importance of matter and the relative unimportance of the method by which the matter was delivered. Dobson and Young, by precept and example, stressed the tremendous importance of presentation. Young liked to say that 90 per cent was presentation and 10 per cent matter. One could readily agree with "An Observer" that Dobson and Young brought new vigour to adult education by offering an approach which made use of what people are and what they do and how they spoke. It was not suggested that the Dobson and Young method of presentation would be suitable for other people or for other subjects. "The important thing here", the "Observer" wrote, "is the very close consideration given to presentation, the exact anticipation of what will arrest attention and hold it, what will stimulate thought, the arrangement of subject matter, the emphasis on salient points."

An important feature of the Dobson and Young technique was that they soon discovered for themselves the need for visual aids and vivid analogies. They illustrated the fundamental principle of form in music by means of coloured tabs, placed in succession on a large card as the music proceeded, or did the same thing by making a simple tune march, so to speak, around the four walls of a room and

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come home to the beginning. Everything they did was made sharp and clear and unambiguous and thoroughly illustrated in ways that stimulated the mind.

The final comment of "An Observer with the Forces" reflected the way in which the whole of army education was being tackled at this period: "Above all, they assumed from the start that education was adventure; it was the one thing worth while, but also it was exciting and it was fun, it required you to *think*, but did not require you to stop being an ordinary sane and happy human being". This, then, was the spirit in which interest in music was being fostered, and it was little wonder that successive civil and military reports were emphatic about the remarkable growth in music. For example, the report of the Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces for the period October 1941-March 1942 stated that the number of lectures or courses that had been held was double that for the preceding six months and that "the potential demand is almost boundless". The limiting factor was the supply of competent musicians able to cope with audiences unpractised in concentrated listening. The military report for the period June-August 1943 showed that, despite the season, interest in music showed no sign of slackening, and the development of new activities was reported from most commands. It was also becoming clear that music-making was on the increase, and the earlier passive listening to gramophone records was being given life and purpose by the development of choirs, operatic societies and small orchestras, by recitals by distinguished instrumentalists and visits to orchestral concerts. But the gramophone recitals never lost popularity, and the only limit to their growth appeared to be the scarcity of gramophones, electric turn-tables and pick-ups. By June 1944 one command reported that more than a hundred music circles were meeting weekly. In Anti-Aircraft Command, the Y.M.C.A. helped to overcome the shortage of amplifying equipment by sending round touring 'music

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vans' to isolated sites; they were greatly appreciated. Towards the end of 1944 many units had become almost self-supporting, and the music circles progressed with little outside help, although a growing number of courses were arranged for groups able to profit from more advanced tuition. Analytical lectures and classes on the history and appreciation of music were frequently held, while arrangements were made through the regional committees for vocalists and instrumentalists to give short concerts in units, combining them with talks and demonstrations of the instruments.

A memorable development at this time was a successful series of chamber music concerts given by the Army Classical Music Group. This was a group of Service artistes which had been enrolled on a Central Pool of Artistes at the War Office by the Directorate of Welfare. They included such eminent musicians as Edmund Rubbra, the composer; William Pleeth, the 'cellist; Joseph Slater, the flautist, and so on. Wherever they appeared they were given enthusiastic receptions by not big but discriminating audiences. Another way in which some units seized their opportunities to foster interest in good music was by holding mid-day concerts. At one command headquarters the music circle held lunch-hour gramophone recitals, and in one large unit a series of mid-day concerts by artistes provided by the command music adviser attracted audiences of 300-500 weekly for a period extending over some months.

In the last few months of 1944, one anti-aircraft group whose units were mainly to be found in Wales, held, not inappropriately, an Eisteddfod.⁵ The competition was divided into six sections, including mixed choirs, all male or all female choirs, male or female soloists, solo instrumentalists, unit orchestras and unit dance bands, and attracted a very large number of entrants. The semi-finals were organised on a brigade basis, adjudications being held in Liverpool, Birmingham, Swansea and Cardiff. Successful competitors

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from each semi-final then proceeded to Cardiff where Dr. Teasdale Griffiths acted as the final adjudicator. Here a considerable amount of talent was revealed and the general officer commanding thought it worth while, later, to send the finalists on tour throughout the group in order that other anti-aircraft personnel could have an opportunity of hearing the talent in their midst.

Perhaps one can best indicate the hold that music had taken on the soldier during the War by referring to some remarks made by a British war correspondent with the British Liberation Army

Apart from the music [he said] I found the Hallé Orchestra's concert in Brussels last week one of the most moving things of the campaign. It was a dark and freezing night and most people had to face the prospect of walking home several miles to their billets afterwards. Something like 3000 soldiers arrived at the hall, many of them on 48 hours' leave from the front. You will realise how vital is every minute of a "48" when Brussels is offering hot baths, clean sheets, movies, dances and meals served with beer and wine. Hundreds of these men preferred to stand in a queue until all hope of a ticket had gone. It was no light programme. Brahms' symphony in C Minor, Wagner and Mozart. . . . Coming directly from war, the highest adventure, they wanted relaxation on the same high plane. At least, that is how I interpreted it.⁶

The remarks of this correspondent were amplified by those of an officer who had fought in Italy.

In the whole history of opera [he wrote], longer seasons, more packed audiences, and more enthusiastic and generally more understanding ones have never been known. The British soldier in Italy has shown a love — not always informed, but what matters that? — for fine music well played, which has astonished everyone, and may cause a revolution in the demand for music when he returns.⁷

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ART

Much of what has already been written about music and handicrafts would also apply to art. The number of men and women actively interested was very small and for them the difficulty was merely the provision of equipment and materials. For the large majority a new approach had to be tried ; with what success we will now consider

Already, by the middle of 1942, exhibitions of the artistic efforts of soldiers had been organised in various parts of the country , these exhibitions reached their peak in a large-scale exhibition which was held at the National Portrait Gallery But there was a strong feeling both inside and outside the Services that emphasis was being placed on the wrong values in art and that too much emphasis was being placed on ends that could be achieved quickly and with little effort. In June 1942 an article by the Director of A.B.C.A. showed that the army authorities were not going to be content with inferior standards.⁷

Mr. Williams explained what the Army had already done to make the soldier art-conscious :

Most soldiers, like most other citizens, have had the scantiest acquaintance with examples of good art, and it is, therefore, inevitable that their taste should tend to be formed by what they see of " art " in posters, advertisements and magazine illustrations. If public taste is ever going to be improved, it can only be on the basis of giving the public access to copious examples of good works of art.

The British Institute of Adult Education had been developing its " Art for the People " scheme since 1934, and soon after war broke out it was adopted by C.E.M.A. Through the agency of C.E.M.A., many hundreds of art exhibitions of all kinds were placed, among other places, in army camps According to W. E. Williams, " there is a double motive in this ' Art for the People ' scheme. Its first aim is to expose people to good pictures ; its second is to expound pictures to

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people." While, so far as possible, the Army was provided with exhibitions, soldiers and auxiliaries were also strongly encouraged to attend the C.E.M.A. exhibitions that were arranged for civilians in many towns; for the latter it was possible to use a resident 'guide' whose job it was to cope with the conundrums which visitors so abundantly raised.

Frequently, circumstances made it impossible for the Army to take advantage of this civilian provision and, to meet its peculiar needs, C.E.M.A. was able to help by providing Army Educational Corps officers with collections of good prints. Usually these were made up into small parcels of six to ten prints and circulated among units, supported where possible by talks given by civilian and Service artists. Unfortunately, in a number of cases, the project was 'unsuccessful because the pictures did not circulate. The prints stayed on the walls and, in time, became little more than decorations. Despite frequent injunctions to keep the prints moving, on many occasions no attempt was made to change the prints, and the scheme broke down on this point in many districts. Since the prints were extremely scarce, it seemed exasperatingly wasteful to keep them in one place beyond their period of optimum exposure value. Where the prints were changed at regular intervals, and where they were suitably displayed in places which did not detract too much from their appearance, these sets of prints did much, just by 'being there', to help the soldier to grasp the purposes and methods of painting.

Another means whereby the appreciation of good standards in art was extended was by the organisation of short courses. These were arranged on a voluntary basis, and either took place at week-ends, or, in some units, on a free day during the week. The response of men who had not had much chance of previous education to cultural subjects was encouraging. An interesting little experiment was tried with one such group. Before they had been told anything

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about pictures they were handed a collection of prints and told to pass them round. The collection went right round in five minutes. Later, after the men had heard a talk on pictures, the same prints were handed to them and this time they were studied for nearly half an hour. One regional committee arranged a series of successful week-end courses on art and architecture, while on other courses the relation of art and design to everyday life aroused considerable interest. In two districts special 24-hour leave courses in appreciation of the arts were run for members of the A.T.S. and were greeted with impressive enthusiasm. The programme included concerts, play readings, poetry readings, lectures on art, and related activities; they were attractive because of their non-specialist character and because they stressed not so much the technicalities as the enjoyment to be obtained from intelligent appreciation. In Anti-Aircraft Command this was carried even further, and a whole series of courses for art instructors and leaders, of one week's duration, was run under the joint direction of Army Educational Corps personnel and the Director of the Leicester Museum and Art Gallery.

So much for the appreciation of art. Considering the number of difficulties that had to be faced, there was also a substantial number of art classes in the Army, even if the vocational and quasi-vocational classes in decoration, sign-writing, poster-work and so forth which many soldiers followed in local schools of art, be omitted. There were other groups, however, who believed that the important thing in art — as in all education — was not what a man had to show for it but what he had learned from the attempt. But the number of such groups was, according to Mr. Williams, distressingly small, and there was too little effort to persuade the soldier to realise, through art, the significance of his everyday environment. Such observers as Sir Kenneth Clark, after looking at exhibitions of soldiers' art, commented on the fact that "so many soldiers go fiddling about with

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sketches of haystacks and old cottages when every barrack square is full of groups and each group is full of life". There were some groups, however, where the pursuit of self-expression was placed as of greater importance than the acquisition of desirable end-products. One such group, for example, was run by a platoon commander (until he was killed), who managed to make a platoon of elderly men of the labouring type sufficiently interested in their local life to draw it. This group, moreover, was never allowed to draw direct from life but was sent for a walk, in the course of which they memorised the impression which later they transferred to paper. Another noteworthy group was a class of wood-carvers conducted by three brilliant and devoted women in St. Andrews. These civilian instructors were available on three nights a week, and members of H.M. and Allied Forces attended whenever they were free to do so. Although engraving was entirely new to all members of the group, the work of four of them was accepted for the Royal Scottish Academy, and fifty prints were shown in a local exhibition. Another art class which did some valuable work was one that met twice a week in the Bishop's Palace at Chichester under the guidance of two women artists. Between June 1942 and October 1943, the class attracted about a thousand students and, in an exhibition arranged in the latter month, showed a high standard of work that ranged from the beginner stage to the more advanced efforts of model portraiture and pictures of architectural interest.

A happy example of the successful co-operation between the Army and civilians occurred in Yorkshire during the winter of 1942. The enterprising Director of the Wakefield Art Gallery, Mr. E. I. Musgrave, arranged a series of musical evenings and discussions on art and made special efforts to induce serving men and women to attend. One young soldier was a diligent attender and showed a keen interest in the discussions. Eventually he revealed that he himself "dabbled" in painting, and, though diffident, was persuaded

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to show some of his work to Mr. Musgrave. The work showed such remarkable expressive power and vitality that Mr. Musgrave soon persuaded certain London buyers to purchase them for the nation.

The activities of an art club which had flourished at an army training centre for more than two years was described in *The Times Educational Supplement* in October 1943. The club had an average strength of twenty-four men and A.T.S., and, although the membership was continually changing, continuity was achieved. In the winter the club met one evening a week for several hours and devoted the time to lectures and discussions on various aspects of art and design as well as to practical work of a varied nature. In the summer, the members spent their Sunday afternoons in the country working together on their hobby. Much of the work was landscape, design and life drawing, models being obtained locally. The club was fortunate in having some members who were professional artists or cartoonists; the majority, however, were amateurs, and, since mutual instruction and help was the feature of the club, they profited greatly by working with the professionals. As a result of this co-operative work, eight exhibitions were held in the unit within two years. One such exhibition had been held in the unit for one week, at the local village school for a second week, and at the nearest town for the third week, as part of their "Holidays at Home" campaign. What could be done when the interest of the men had been aroused was shown in another unit when a kiln was built by the men themselves to fire the pottery made on a number of neighbouring sites out of locally mined clay.

Nevertheless, these groups were few and far between, and the formation of new ones was not encouraged by the lack of suitable rooms where drawing and painting could be done, nor by the shortage of 'leaders' who could develop individual work. Many Army Educational Corps sergeants fitted themselves to give 'improvised' instruction in art,

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but most of them seemed too preoccupied with technical performance and were indifferent to the 'therapeutical' side of the work. There were some exceptions like the Army Educational Corps serjeant who was successful in persuading hospital patients to paint and carve, even to carve in soap, but the shortage of competent instructors was never adequately met. Throughout the scheme the scarcity of teachers qualified to organise classes in art tended to place the emphasis on art appreciation rather than on creative activity. In speaking of art appreciation, it is worth recording that one command found it much more satisfactory to use practising artists rather than art teachers for instructional purposes.

Yet although there were comparatively few classes in art, the interest in them was shown by the various reports of the Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces. The report for the period ending March 1942, for example, showed that the arts were high up on the list, ranking next to current events, history and science. Six months later, the Central Advisory Council was able to announce that 979 lectures in the arts had been given by civilians in that period, together with forty-four courses and thirty classes. In order to develop the work, two full-time civilian lecturers were appointed by the Central Advisory Council and allocated to different regional committees in turn; these appointments were amply justified. Another experiment was a tour by a well-known artist who gave lecture-demonstrations on "The Principles of Painting" and "Figure Painting". His visits were greatly appreciated by the troops and resulted in a surprising amount of actual creative work. This famous artist who made good use of the soldier's potential interest in art was Adrian Hill. In July 1943 he accepted a surprise invitation from a camp in the South of England to give a lecture on modern art. The experimental talk turned out to be the forerunner of an uninterrupted series of art lectures, extending over a period of eight months, in which a wide

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range and variety of topics was discussed. Despite counter-attractions and necessary absences for military duties, a good attendance was maintained throughout. After five months, instructional classes in drawing and painting were started and were an instantaneous success. Although Hill lamented the comparative lack of interest shown by the officers (an observation made by many other lecturers), he himself was keenly aware of the magnificent response of the men and stated that not the least important result was "the awakening of a critical faculty and an unprejudiced conviction which inevitably grows out of a closer knowledge of traditional and contemporary art" 9

Hill's opinion was also shared by another distinguished art critic, who, after a visit to an exhibition called "Art in the Army", which was held in London in January 1946, wrote in the *Sunday Times*.

What interests me in the exhibition is the section showing the work of men who, never having handled a paintbrush before, have joined art classes at two Army Education centres. The dreary efforts of adult amateurs with no other guides than mild enthusiasm and a vague memory of the sepia photogravure over the drawing-room mantelpiece are familiar enough. These paintings could have been equally dreary. But they are not. Instructors with imagination have somehow communicated the secret of imaginative courage, which I in my innocence had thought to be the monopoly of children. These pictures are neither incompetently professional nor "genuinely primitive". They are attempts to discover new harmonies of colour and to extract the full meaning of shape from objects of everyday life. They have been done with manifest enjoyment, and what is equally important, no one who had once painted like that could fail thereafter to look at other paintings with a discovering eye.

A further development was the fitting up of an art room in various army study centres. One such room was prepared in the Belfast Study Centre and was open throughout the day, artists' materials being available at all times; occasional talks and supervision were given by an art critic

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This account would not be complete unless reference was made to the splendid contribution made by various art schools, particularly for those individuals who were genuinely interested in art and whose careers and training had, in most cases, been interrupted. Comprehensive schemes were drawn up to enable men and women members of both the British and Overseas Forces serving in Britain to study art free of charge in their off-duty hours. The schemes were devised individually by the schools at the suggestion of the Board (now Ministry) of Education and the local education authorities, and aimed at giving serving men and women who were employed as professional artists, or were apprenticed to them before the War, the opportunity of keeping up the work and of receiving expert tuition. Although special attention was paid to those who had only just left school at the outbreak of war, and to young apprentices, facilities were also available for those wishing to take up art for the first time.

Further, some head librarians at the public libraries worked in conjunction with the art schools, and extended their quota of books on art subjects; they also arranged for facilities for study at the libraries. Every effort was made by the principals of the art schools to ensure that tuition should follow on from the point where the students had left off their training at the outbreak of war. Some of the art schools, for example, had an arrangement for exchanging information about their pupils. Thus, when a soldier student reported at a school, he was asked for the name of the school where he had last studied. His new principal then wrote to the old school for a report of his training there, and, if possible, for a copy of the syllabus of instruction carried out and the stage reached at the time when the studies had to be broken off. The greatest number to take advantage of this scheme were either engaged in or designed for careers as architects or interior decorators while a fair number were studying to be art teachers or magazine decorators.

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DRAMA

Much of what has been written about music and art would also apply to the growth of drama in the war-time scheme of army education. But dramatic activities were never as popular as music or even art, many reasons were adduced for this. Probably the main one was that dramatic productions are essentially group activities which needed more settled and stable conditions than was possible among soldiers training for war. Not less important was the fact that the producing of plays tended to fall between the two stools of 'Education' and 'Entertainment'. The result was that the two departments often left the organisation of dramatic activities to each other, and the work did not make the progress it might have done if one department had been made entirely responsible for it.

As with music and art, the growth of drama again took place in two directions, namely, by extending knowledge and appreciation of the theatre and all that it stood for, and by the actual production of plays. These two sides naturally were interdependent, but, for convenience, they will be discussed separately.

From the first it was clear that there was a considerable, if inarticulate, interest in the theatre and that methods would have to be found to release this interest from its latent source. Here the work of civilians must be specially commended. Through the regional committees, numbers of talented men and women with intimate knowledge of the theatre visited units to try to win the soldiers' interest, either by dramatic sketches or by accounts of their personal experiences in the theatre. More often than not they succeeded and, in its report of September 1943, the Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces gave a good illustration of the way in which the work was gaining ground. One regional committee alone had reported that in six months a hundred and forty-one 'drama' visits to units had been

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made, during which forty-seven play-reading groups had been formed. Similar reports were made by the military authorities, although, as with many other activities, the work done was seriously limited by the shortage of competent instructors. Considerable use was made of the services of actors, actresses and producers who found themselves in the Army ; but it was not until the later stages of the European War that these men and women really came into their own. From the beginning, a large number of play-reading circles had been formed, and, throughout the War, this continued to be the most practical and widespread dramatic group activity.

A noteworthy development in the growth of dramatic activity occurred in 1943 when, in collaboration with E.N.S.A., a full-time drama adviser was appointed to the staff of a regional committee. The lively enthusiasm of this adviser did much to increase interest in drama in this particular regional committee's area, and within a short time units whom he had visited were regularly applying to him for advice or assistance. Towards the end of the same year, another regional committee, collaborating with the A.T.S. staff officer for education in the district, arranged a series of week-end leave courses at the University of Leeds. The demonstrators on those leave courses were the drama organisers to the Derbyshire Education Committee, and, for the best part of forty-eight hours, they succeeded in holding fascinated audiences of up to a hundred and fifty people with their lectures and practical demonstrations of technique, stage, speech and voice projection, play-reading, and the actor's approach to a part. Later, these two organisers became full-time lecturers under the Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces, and their work in promoting interest in the drama earned them appreciative audiences in many parts of the country.

Parallel developments took place with other regional committees and, by the end of 1944, the demand for drama

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was such that, wherever suitable lecturers were available, there was more than enough to keep them fully occupied. Much supplementary work was done by other regional committee lecturers in advising the units' own producers and in increasing people's interest in good plays as well as in the practical technique of production and acting. In one district the Y.M.C.A. made themselves responsible for week-end courses in acting and production which were attended by Service personnel. In this connection, mention must be made of the inestimable work done by the A.B.C.A. Play Unit in extending the Army's interest in the theatre as a whole (see p. 171). Nor must one forget the way in which appreciation of the theatre was fostered by the War Office decision to subsidise organised visits to theatres, and, where necessary, to provide occasional transport.

On the 'productions' side, the story was again one of steady growth and expansion. So early as June 1942, one command reported that *Twelfth Night* had been creditably performed in a unit. The producer had been lent by E.N.S.A., the scenery had been made by army personnel attending a local school of art, and the performers were soldiers and auxiliaries. One-act plays were popular in many units, and the steady increase in dramatic activities was reflected in the number of units who affiliated their societies to the British Drama League. Before the end of 1942, the Edinburgh Area Dramatic Group had produced its third play, and in Scottish Command a Drama League Festival had been held which attracted many entries and received high praise in the Press for the good standard of the productions. In an "Arts Week" which was held at Catterick at this time, original one-act plays which had been submitted for competition earned favourable comment from the adjudicator, Mr. Emlyn Williams, the well-known actor, playwright and producer.

Some idea of the number and kind of productions that were performed in units may be seen from a quarterly report

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that was issued by a single command (Northern) Apart from plays given by C.E.M.A. and E.N.S.A., in the three months up to December 1943, the following plays were given in units. *George and Margaret*, *Judgment Day*, *Laburnum Grove*, *By Candlelight*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *The Dover Road*, *Tilly of Bloomsbury*, *Night Must Fall* and *Thunder Rock*. A month later, in the same command, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was performed to the accompaniment of Mendelssohn's music. An interesting side-light to this play was that, for a large number of soldiers, it was the first play on the stage they had ever seen, all their previous experience of dramatic productions having been gained in the cinema. In the isolation of the Orkneys considerable attention was paid to drama, and some of the best dramatic work in the Army as a whole was done in this area. One festival, which took place in 1944, attracted entries from twenty-four teams, some of them reaching quite a high standard of production.

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Chapter Thirteen

Education Centres

IN the eleventh annual report of the Pilgrim Trust for the year 1941, accounts were given of the assistance made by the Trust to projects which were helping the national war effort. One of the most interesting of these accounts described an experiment that was being made by the British Institute of Adult Education in providing some model "Army Study Centres". By the end of 1941 there were several of these centres in existence, in places as far apart as York, Hounslow, Larkhill and Glasgow

These study centres had been developed for three reasons. (1) For many soldiers the hardest part of military life was the lack of facilities for writing letters and reading books in peace and quiet. (2) The loss of opportunities for keeping up such interests as music and art was a heavy burden for some soldiers. (3) In civilian life many men and women who now found themselves in the Army were used to spending a few hours each week in a library reading-room, a community centre or village institute; in isolated units, particularly, the lack of these opportunities was a severe blow to their accustomed leisure-routine. These were the motives that lay behind the establishment of army study centres or army quiet rooms, as they were sometimes called. Many quiet rooms, of course, had been set aside for the troops from the early days of the War by organisations like the Young Men's Christian Association and the Church Army. This type of quiet room was, naturally, a welcome amenity; but it was an elementary one. It was adequate for reading or for letter-writing; but could do little for those who wished to

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take part in gramophone recitals of good music, the practice of arts and crafts, the use of a reference library and so on. To allow those activities to develop, therefore, army study centres were formed.

At first these study centres were set up in garrison towns ; the premises used varied from place to place. In Glasgow and Belfast, for example, ordinary dwelling-houses were taken over for the purpose, while in York the " Command Education Officer, collaborating with the Command Welfare Officer, transformed a disused and decrepit tavern into a compact and attractive centre for 'serious' pleasures".¹ The Glasgow centre, consisting of an eight-roomed terrace house, was especially good. The facilities comprised a comfortable reading-room furnished on club lines, supplied with newspapers, reviews and other publications. A reference library was built up as well as a lending library, while a stock of text-books was also made. One room was used for writing, while provision was made for listening to wireless programmes, for lectures on art and music, concerts and exhibitions. A separate room was provided for the sole use of the A.T.S.

In most units it was impossible to establish anything as ambitious as these army study centres, but many of the units took advantage of an army order which authorised the establishment and equipping of unit quiet rooms. A large number of these quiet rooms became the centre of both formal and informal educational activities within the units. But the use of them was generally limited and specific. In the army study centres it was possible to carry out a wider range of activities ; but even here there were usually not enough facilities provided to cater for the educational needs of the majority of soldiers and auxiliaries. In a few places, owing to the good offices of, sometimes, welfare officers, sometimes of voluntary organisations, and, always to the enthusiasm and initiative of members of the Army Educational Corps, it has become obvious that the :

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Army Study Centres blossomed into something more elaborate — into Education Centres, which provide a focus and a meeting place for Service educational activities over a wider area. In Dover, Liverpool and Glasgow, to name only a few places, there are many members of all three Services who have found in them a haven for study, enlightenment and recreation.²

A description of the Dover Services Centre may serve to show the type and range of activity which took place in these centres generally.

Because of its peculiar position in "Bomb Alley", facilities for adult education were almost non-existent in Dover during the early years of the War. This made life wearisome for some members of the Forces stationed in that hard-hit area, and it was not surprising when, towards the end of 1942, the Army and Y.M.C.A. co-operated in the organisation of an educational centre which would be open to all members of H.M. and the United Nations Forces: "Home Guards, Police, N.F.S., A.R.P. and Observer Corps personnel in uniform are also admitted to lectures, and, of course, members of the Merchant Navy".³ Suitable premises were obtained in the shape of an empty forty-roomed house in the centre of the town, which was requisitioned and the raid scars of which were repaired. The Royal Engineers and various garrison units helped in the work of painting and decorating, and the Y.M.C.A. agreed to install a canteen and supply furniture. Kent County Library provided more than a thousand new volumes for a library, while newspapers and magazines of various countries were obtained from a dozen sources. Reading, writing, and quiet rooms were provided, the local chaplains were allotted small rooms for informal talks, and a legal advice bureau was started. Then, as Lieutenant (afterwards Lieut.-Colonel) C. H. Philips, of the Army Educational Corps, who became the first officer-in-charge of the Centre, said:

The prospective students in the Navy, Army and Air Force, and including many members of the W.R.N.S., A.T.S. and

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W.A.A.F., were asked what they wanted from the Centre, and from over a thousand came the reply, "handicrafts, especially woodwork and metalwork, languages, in particular, French, German and Russian; motor engineering, wireless, electricity and mathematics; shorthand and book-keeping, discussion groups and a library."⁴

Then came appeals for economics, music and art. Using these subjects as a nucleus, an extensive curriculum was built up, the aim being to provide on each evening of the week at least one cultural, one technical and one purely academic class or group.

Within three months [continued Philips], this was achieved, there being developed on the cultural side alone two art groups, small in numbers but doing superb work, two drama groups, an orchestra and two music appreciation circles of about sixty members each, one being held on Sunday after the weekly evening Service.

All the classes were held in the centre with the exception of physical training, judo and unarmed combat, which were held at the garrison gymnasium. Among the more 'popular' activities were classes in household repairs, public speaking and ballroom dancing. One night of the week was set aside for special lectures, when many distinguished lecturers were greeted with large, appreciative and discerning audiences. Another valuable service performed by the centre was the arranging of visits to places of interest, including local industrial plants, collieries and so on. These visits were welcomed, particularly by Canadian and U.S. Service men. One local antiquarian, then serving as a bombardier in that area, achieved considerable popularity, especially with Allied soldiers, for his conducted tours to various parts of Kent.

To meet the needs of students who wished to prepare for an examination, a matriculation course was devised for the London University Services examination. This was co-ordinated with the War Office matriculation postal course and met with a splendid response. "Some 90 students

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registered for it," wrote the Education Officer, "of whom just less than half have recently and satisfactorily completed the first twelve-week stage of the course. Four-fifths of them, it is worthy of note, have had no schooling since the age of 14." To make up for one of the big defects of army life, full provision was made in the centre for quiet study; a number of Service students were able to sit for public examinations there.

One of the great problems of running a centre of this kind was the supply of teachers. It was known that in the Dover Garrison there were dozens of men with long teaching experience, including tutors and lecturers from various universities. All the men and women approached agreed to help, and eventually included a couple of W.R.N.S. officers, a gunner (otherwise a distinguished artist), a Royal Signals officer, a W.A.A.F. serjeant, a regimental serjeant-major from the Royal Army Medical Corps and so on. The team included several fellows of learned societies, a couple of doctors of philosophy, and a score or more with honours and other degrees. An important point about the organisation was that no course was started in any subject unless there was in reserve a second teacher for that subject. If any teacher was called out on duty on his class night, he was under a moral obligation to telephone the centre so that the substitute could be warned. When the centre was opened it was feared that many of these volunteer instructors from the Services would tire of giving up their precious spare time for what might seem a thankless task. This fear proved to be completely unfounded.

Besides these Service instructors, a small number of civilian teachers gave a considerable part of their leisure time to the centre, with very fruitful results. The main part of the organisation, however, was performed by a small but enthusiastic and inspiring group of Army Educational Corps instructors; from the start each of these took charge of one department of the work — cultural classes, technical classes,

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etc., while they also formed the nucleus of the teaching staff. During the day-time, the centre was used for British Way and Purpose and A.B.C.A. courses and for special classes, such as those for illiterates, besides being used as an Army Educational Corps distributing centre for local units. Many Service men and women used their occasional day-time leisure to work on their own in the reading-room or the library, the art room and the woodwork shop.

One of the major difficulties experienced by the centre, as by most army units attempting educational work, was the rapid turnover of personnel. The only answer to this problem was the holding of short courses. In Dover these were kept down to 8-10 weeks ; in German, for example, there were generally three classes at different stages, each course being repeated every two months. In this way the ebb and flow of students was, to some extent, met. Another feature of the centre was the absence of formality. Officers, non-commissioned officers and private soldiers sat down together in the classes on a basis of complete equality ; in several cases the instructor was a private soldier. The informal atmosphere was particularly evident in the canteen, lounge and common room, where the students were wont to gather before classes.

This centre played an important part in the lives of thousands of Service men and women in Dover. So did similar institutions situated in other towns and cities of Great Britain. The general attitude to them was summed up by one soldier when he remarked : " This Centre [Dover] will be one of the things I shall miss most when I return to civilian life." Impressed by the success of the original centres, at the beginning of 1944 the War Office decided that education centres should be established in each command as part of the army education scheme.

One centre, at Salisbury, which by October 1944 was attracting an average of 1200 visitors weekly, developed on rather different lines from the Dover centre. At Salisbury

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there was less attempt to provide formal classes. This in itself was an answer to many of the critics of army education who objected to it as something super-imposed from above. Each centre developed according to the philosophy and practice of the particular Army Educational Corps representative in charge. In Salisbury the dominating purpose, as Warrant Officer Coulson put it, was

to cut across the notion of B.W.P. and I.Q.'s by attempting not to continue an education which in most cases has never properly begun, but to stimulate, and then, not to try too specifically to define the terms in which this incentive is best expressed, but, by continual exposure to the Centre's environment and by personal contact, to help the soldier work out the individual shape of his own salvation, believing — as a member of the Hallé Orchestra said — that most people don't know how much they enjoy music until they first listen to it.⁵

The Centre had a fourfold policy : (1) To raise the standard of entertainment by getting people in on their own terms. (2) To combat the lack of stamina and mental initiative of people who had previously been over-exposed to urbanisation, some kind of social compensation was adopted. (3) To teach that method of intensive personal education which might be continued by the right use of libraries and museums. (4) To provide an environment which would allow the people whom it affected to express themselves in some way or other.⁵ In other places the centres developed on still different lines, and, in each case, an important contribution to the education of serving men and women was made.

In commands abroad there had been a parallel but independent development. Thus, centres of one sort or other were set up either by the Army Educational Corps or voluntary enterprise in most of the towns and garrisons of the Middle East. Some had picturesque names like " Candlelight Cottage ", " Beacon House " and " Fox Mask Club ". Some had a building to themselves, others occupied a part of a larger institution, while others were housed in

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tents. The typical centre provided a library, an information room, a quiet room, and rooms for letter-writing, lectures, classes and recreational activities. In June 1944 it was stated that authority had been given to construct sixty-one permanent educational centres in the Middle East. Many of these were to be in the Suez Canal area and others in Syria and Cyprus. Similar centres were organised in other overseas stations.

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Chapter Fourteen

Basic Education

AN indication that the army authorities were seriously perturbed about the number of illiterate soldiers it contained was revealed by Sir Ronald Adam, Adjutant-General to the Forces, on December 6, 1941 *

We have [he stated] illiterates among the Army intake. Illiterates cannot be trained for modern war, but in the man-power crisis we are facing the Army must make the best use of all material. The Army must, therefore, take in hand the education of the illiterate so that he can take his place in the ranks.¹

This chapter will describe the way in which the Army faced up to the responsibility of providing basic education for its illiterate members, the approximate numbers of whom were given by the Financial Secretary to the War Office in December 1943, when he stated in the House of Commons: "Just under 1½ per cent of the men enlisted into the Army in the last year and a half are illiterate".²

This responsibility was being partly borne even when the Adjutant-General was writing the words quoted above. Throughout the winter of 1941-2, for example, Mrs. Blanche Suckling, who was a lecturer under the auspices of the Liverpool Regional Committee, was teaching small classes of illiterates in an anti-aircraft group in the West of England.

* The War Office had shown its concern about the number of illiterates in the early part of 1941, when it had been decided that the education of illiterates would be carried on as far as possible at the training units to which they were posted on enlistment. But it was also stated that it would not be practicable to introduce a general scheme to deal with the education of illiterates during the war and that A E C instructors would be expected, *inter alia*, to cater for illiterates in units to which the instructors were attached.

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The fact that there exists the problem of illiteracy at all in the Army of today [Mrs Suckling said] has come as somewhat of a shock to the general public, who have, for the most part, been unaware that after seventy years of compulsory education, it is possible for children to evade school completely or to attend so infrequently as to grow up almost entirely illiterate.³

Through their investigations, members of the Army Educational Corps brought to light some cases of complete illiteracy, but much more numerous were the cases of what might be called partial literacy, that is, men who knew the letters of the alphabet (their names and shapes), who could read easy words and write simple phrases to dictation, but who had no real facility or capability in language and insufficient power in elementary sentence building and writing to complete official documents like drivers' work tickets and accident forms.

The particular anti-aircraft units investigated by the Army Educational Corps consisted of a total number of 1400 men, twenty-eight of these (2 per cent) being illiterate, five of them being completely so. Of the true illiterates, their previous history showed that three of them had missed schooling altogether — one had spent all his life in a travelling fair, another in a circus, and the third had lived in his youth in the West of England, ten miles from the nearest school — and the other two had received some schooling but said vaguely they had been ill and missed a lot. In comparison with the circus equestrian performer, these last two seemed to be in a low mental category. The twenty-three partially literate men had all received some schooling, most of them up to the age of fourteen, but had obviously not advanced beyond the most elementary stage — some no further than the average child of seven years — and although they could read a little, could not put sentences together for themselves. These men usually said that they could read and write but could not spell. It was Mrs Suckling's belief that "frequent and prolonged absence from school for a variety of reasons would

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seem to be the explanation of this state of affairs, for the men, though slow at their work, do not give the impression of mental deficiency". The progress made by the men confirmed Mrs. Suckling's observation, and indicated that they should be described as accidental rather than as constitutional illiterates.

None of these men had needed to use writing for the purposes of their daily work; before entry to the Army, most were manual, often casual workers, and odd-job men in industry and agriculture. For many, too, who did not take kindly to letters in their school days, the introduction of the sound film and of broadcast news, during the last decade and a half, had replaced their need for the printed word. A large number of the illiterates also reported that their wives (and children) could read and write, and advanced this as their excuse for having forgotten what they once learned, or alternatively, as a reason why they themselves now wished to learn.

Under Mrs Suckling's guidance, this group of men made rapid progress, and experience gained with them led to the development of many other classes for illiterates in other parts of the country. One of the more notable of these voluntary schools was at a Pioneer Corps group in Scotland, where the commanding officer, in collaboration with the command education officer, arranged that a permanent school should be set up for the benefit of the illiterate men in all the companies in that particular group.

All courses that were arranged, however, in any part of the country, remained on a voluntary basis, and it was not until the autumn of 1943 that an announcement was made that an organised effort would be made to overcome the problem of illiteracy in the Army. In October 1943, two letters were issued by the War Office, authorising the establishment of basic education centres and emphasising that it was in the interest "both of the Army and of the Nation" to eliminate illiteracy. About the same time, it was stated that a series of

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instructional books was being specially prepared, since no suitable book for the instruction of adult illiterates appeared to exist.

During the winter of 1943-4, almost every military district in Great Britain became responsible for organising full-time courses of 6-8 weeks' duration to help backward soldiers along the road to literacy. Before these courses began, members of the Army Educational Corps made close liaison with representatives of the Personnel Selection Department, the branch of the Army which, since July 1942, had been charged with classifying recruits into particular intelligence and aptitude categories to fit them, so far as was possible, into those army jobs which would make best use of their capabilities. It was thus possible to ensure that the illiterates who attended the basic education courses were not constitutionally incapable of profiting by them. This co-operation with the Personnel Selection Department — as well as the army psychiatrists — proved of the greatest value to those members of the Army Educational Corps whose duty it was to organise the basic education courses, and warm tribute must be paid to the former for the enthusiastic way in which they assumed their new and sometimes heavy responsibilities.

One of the first of the basic education courses was run on an experimental basis in Scottish Command. A description of it may give some indication of the methods and organisation which were used. The principal aim of the course was that it would enable all the men to express themselves with some clearness and accuracy, both in speech and writing ; a good letter home was a particular target. Sixteen men were selected for the course, their average age being thirty-two. Nearly all, according to their own statements, had attended school until the age of fourteen, although many of them attended very intermittently owing to sickness or truancy. Most of the men knew the digits and could do simple calculations, but only two had any knowledge of either reading

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or writing. The course was held at an army education centre and lasted twelve weeks, during which time the men were wholly at the disposal of the educational staff.

The bulk of the time was occupied with reading, writing and, to a lesser degree, arithmetic; but handicrafts also figured prominently in the programme. Other features of the course were: map-reading, interior economy, which included maintenance of the garden and simple household repairs which were needed in the centre; a mend-and-darn period, a short news 'flash' in the information room daily, and, of course, British Way and Purpose and A.B.C.A. So that each man would receive a great deal of individual attention, the group was divided into two sections of eight. Most of the instruction was done by two whole-time Army Educational Corps specialists, one for the '3 R's', and the other for handicrafts. One feature of the instruction, which proved to be of great value, was that each man carried in his pocket a notebook in which, under the instructor's guidance, he built up day by day a dictionary of simple basic English words which he could master at leisure.

Of the value of this and other basic education courses there could be no doubt. In February 1944 it was possible to write:

All reports speak of the great value of the work and, in the great majority of cases, the student makes real progress. Most Commands emphasise that the personality of the instructor is of more importance than 'phonic', 'sentence', or any other method, and it is satisfactory that the work of regimental instructors is generally praised. The men themselves are undoubtedly co-operative, once the feeling of inferiority has been overcome, and, in many instances, are almost pathetically eager to learn. Few major problems of administration have arisen, and there is general agreement that the courses are of the highest value to morale.

Instructors showed considerable ingenuity in arousing and maintaining interest. Among the teaching methods evolved

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were a careful plan to co-ordinate handicrafts with the teaching of reading, writing and simple arithmetic, the successful incorporation of music in a syllabus, and various uses of Ministry of Information photographs in training memory powers and the capacity to write 'Lexicon' was used with success in several places, although in one case a man refused to participate because he "never played cards". These basic education courses were at first only authorised for the winter period of 1943-4; but it soon became clear that the Army could not afford to let them drop. It was no surprise, therefore, when it was announced that the courses would continue for men who had passed through the early phases of military training. Further, 50 per cent of the most intelligent illiterates in every new intake of recruits were to be allowed to attend special basic education centres after they had completed their first four weeks in the Army.

By the end of February 1944, the instructional books had been issued to all the basic education centres. These had been prepared by the Inter-Services Committee for Modern Languages and consisted of a student's book called *English Parade*, which was in two parts, and an instructor's handbook. The approach adopted was that of a combination of the 'sentence' and 'phonic' methods (In the phonic method, the student learns the sound of letters and then builds them up into words.) The books were written deliberately in the simplest language with a controlled gradation, and the reading matter selected was expected to be of adult interest. Life in the Army was chosen as the main theme because the Army was the common denominator of interest. Each chapter was based on words having the same vowel sound, with additional non-phonetic words (called 'sight' words) added, to allow of the formation of sentences. Writing was introduced because experience had shown that progress was more rapid when reading and writing were practised concurrently. Above all, since progress depended primarily on the effort of the student,

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it was emphasised that individual methods of instruction should be used.

It should not be assumed that the basic education centres were in any way stereotyped. The numbers attending varied according to local circumstances, as did the duration of the course. The difficulty of finding any accommodation made it inevitable that the education officer should be flexible in his requirements. In practice, the accommodation varied from a requisitioned house, part of a Nissen or hutted camp, an annexe to a civilian school, or an army education centre. Moreover, apart from recommending that three, or at most four, hours a day should be regarded as the maximum which could profitably be devoted to reading and writing, the War Office gave local education officers a free hand in devising their syllabuses. That this freedom was exercised may be seen from the following table, representing an analysis of the programmes of ten leading centres made by an inspecting officer in March 1944 :

Subject	Percentage of Time Allotted	Average Percentage
Reading and writing . . .	32-65	49.0
Arithmetic . . .	0-19	9.5
News, current affairs } . .	4-16	7.0
Civics } . .		
History, geography } . .	0-7	4.0
Map-reading } . .		
Handicrafts . . .	0-14	5.5
P.T. and games . . .	4-23	11.5
Interior economy (cleaning, etc.)	0-15	6.0
Other subjects, e.g. Music, films, visits to places of interest, quizzes, etc	0-17	7.0

(A 30-35 hour working week was a normal figure.⁵)

The flexibility of the whole scheme was shown by the way the illiteracy problem was tackled by different Pioneer Corps

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units. Three Pioneer Corps groups had set up their own schools by April 1941, while one Pioneer Corps training centre held regular classes. In one reserve division, too, men who could not be spared to attend a full six-weeks course were placed under the tutelage of Army Educational Corps instructors who had been loaned by districts. In two commands, separate courses were arranged for members of the A.T.S. By May 1945, 6225 men and 75 women had attended courses at basic education centres.⁶ The work was being carried on in fifteen permanent centres in home commands, and, in one of them at least (Anti-Aircraft Command), the courses had been extended from six to eleven weeks.

To get an independent and expert opinion of these basic education centres, the War Office invited Mr. John Duncan, headmaster of Lankhills School, Winchester, to visit some of the forty to fifty courses that were in progress in Great Britain, and report on them. During February and March 1944, Mr Duncan visited several of the basic education centres and saw some of them that were just beginning, some midway through, and some that were near completion. Afterwards he wrote: "I was amazed and filled with admiration at what I saw. . . . The results of these six-weeks courses appear almost miraculous."⁷ Mr Duncan went on to say:

All the courses were well arranged . . . and presented three striking features:

(a) The spirit and tone of the courses were remarkable. The instructors were enthusiastic, kindly and sympathetic teachers and leaders. The men were interested, keen and responsive. There was an atmosphere of steady, happy effort.

(b) The difference between the men beginning a course and the men finishing a course was so great as to be almost incredible. Many men beginning their course were slovenly in appearance, slow, suspicious, shy, afraid, unhappy, and obviously feeling inferior. They were emotionally disturbed. Those in the later weeks of a course were clean, smart, alert soldiers. They were happy, friendly, well-mannered, well-poised and confident. They

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had acquired a self-respect that some had lost and some had never had

(c) The progress made in acquiring reading techniques in the short period of six weeks far surpassed my most optimistic hopes. Only total illiterates were selected to attend, yet out of every thirty men attending courses, between ten and twenty reached the stage of being able to read and understand a newspaper. Practically all reached the stage of being able, unaided, to write letters to their families.*

Probably the most important point about Mr. Duncan's report was his view about the causes of illiteracy among adults. These, he said, were threefold. The primary cause was the large size of classes in junior schools. Most of the soldiers he saw were men of below middle academic ability — somewhere within the intelligence quotient range of 70-90 — but were quite capable of acquiring good reading attainments. In the junior schools these men had been slow learners and had increasingly lagged behind, eventually coming to a stop, either completely without the art of reading or acquiring so little of the techniques that they were unable to use them. A secondary cause of illiteracy appeared to be the lack of suitable books for 'C' classes in senior schools, while other reasons advanced by the men to account for illiteracy were ones that have already been lightly touched upon, that is, failure to attend school, changes of school, illiterate parents, and no books or papers at home. These reasons, according to Mr Duncan, might be valid for those few illiterates who were of middle academic ability or

* Some of the first letters written by former illiterates had their amusing as well as their poignant sides. One soldier, for example, for some reason best known to himself, found himself in a detention barracks. Whilst serving his sentence he was taught to read and write by an Army Educational Corps warrant officer. His first letter was written to his mother, who was so overjoyed to receive it that she immediately wrote to the commandant of the detention barracks to express her pleasure. After glowing tributes to the people who had helped her Johnny, the mother finished with a postscript which ran: "Why ever wasn't my Johnny sent to Detention Barracks before?"

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above, but the vast majority would be of lower intellectual level, and would be the slow learners of the junior schools. With them, absence from school was found to be due to dislike of school work, at which they were failures, possibly because it was too academic and verbal. Absence, however, appeared to be a secondary cause of their inability to read, the primary cause being their lagging behind owing to class methods forced on teachers through large classes.

A searching investigation into the causes of illiteracy was carried out by a psychologist, Mr. W. D. Walls, when attached to a central ordnance depot. It revealed, he wrote, that "it is legitimate to conclude that a primary factor in the reading backwardness of the General Duty group is a low standard of intelligence".⁸ Mr. Walls also reported that

Common sense supports the statistical evidence that, for the pupil of normal or nearly normal intelligence, long absence and irregular attendance act as serious handicaps. We may, however, go further. For a pupil whose innate endowment is subnormal, the habit of casual absence has a more lasting and devastating effect upon his progress in reading. Probably less care is taken by the harassed teacher of a large class to bring the child who has missed an afternoon up-to-date than is exercised in making good the ground lost through a lengthy period of illness.⁹

Other interesting points that arose from Mr. Duncan's survey⁷ were the differences between adult and child illiterates. Men illiterates, after long years of failure, had a sense of complete defeat and needed their confidence restored. They abhorred "childish things" and school work altogether. Yet their maturity, experience of life and will-power enabled them to work with greater determination and concentration than children. Further, although now unable to read simple words, some of these men had learned to read a little at school but had forgotten. It was probably the combination of maturity with the fact that formerly they had been able to "read a bit" that accounted for the rapid rate

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of progress that was made by some of the backward soldiers on these six-weeks courses.

Further information about the men at the basic education centres was provided by observations made in Southern Command: 80 per cent of the men who had attended the Command Basic Education Centre had come from the Pioneer Corps, and the rest had come from infantry and various other army corps. Those that had never been to school numbered 10 per cent; 45 per cent had attended irregularly, and more than half of these because of illness. The other 45 per cent had attended regularly, but most of them stated that they were slow and "could not do it", or "teacher did not bother with me". The age groups were not what one might have expected: 50 per cent of the men were between eighteen and twenty-six years of age, and the rest from twenty-six to forty-six years. The oldest were not necessarily the slowest learners although, generally, it was found that men over forty made poor students. A further point of interest was that more than a few had voluminous 'crime sheets', but had given little or no trouble on the course. Firm handling had been necessary, but the men had responded well to the keenness and interest of the instructors.

One of the distressing features of this training in basic education was that, in many units, the good results achieved on the courses were not followed up. Firm attempts to remedy this situation were made by some command education officers; but although admirable follow-up work was done in many units, difficulties invariably arose, and the unfortunate soldier who had returned from a course to his unit with enthusiasm often slumped into the slough of despond when he found that nothing was being done there to help him. Within a short time his 'reading' attainments dropped considerably. Fortunately, 'refresher' courses were organised at basic education centres, and many soldiers were able to profit by a second visit. Even this did not remove the

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necessity for frequent supervision of a man's work in his own unit, and the Army Educational Corps did not relax in their attempts to achieve continued instruction in all cases.

There can be little doubt that the basic education courses made a magnificent contribution to the fighting efficiency of the Army by improving the mental quality of men whose great failing had often been due to misfortune alone. As Major Shawyer wrote .

It would be foolish to make exaggerated claims regarding the effectiveness of courses which last for only six weeks, and it is naturally exceptional, though not unknown, for a complete illiterate to leave a Basic Education Centre with something like normal fluency. Nevertheless, very valuable progress is achieved in that time in the great majority of cases. Results vary greatly according to the intelligence and interest of the men concerned and the skill of the instructor, the range being from a fraction of a reading year to more than seven years as measured by Burt's or similar reading tests. An average improvement would be in the neighbourhood of two reading years with a slightly smaller increase in spelling age.¹

When one remembers the great improvement in the quality of individual soldiers effected at the basic education centres, it might reasonably be said that, if the army education scheme had achieved no more during the Second World War than the educational reclamation of many illiterate soldiers, it would have been amply justified. Its considerable success should provide civilian educationists with the necessary stimulus and inspiration to tackle the infinitely larger problem of the near-illiterates.

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Chapter Fifteen

Education Overseas

THE foregoing account has been mainly concerned with the way in which the war-time scheme of education made progress with the troops at home. Much of it would also apply to troops overseas, for, in November 1940, it had been decided to extend the scheme to British troops wherever they might be. As a result, war establishments for the Army Educational Corps were approved in 1941 for Malaya, Gibraltar, Malta, Sierra Leone, Ceylon, Hong Kong and the Middle East. In January 1942 approval was given for the formation of the East African Army Educational Corps, and, by the end of 1942, educational facilities were being provided in almost every country overseas where it was possible to do so. Meanwhile India was developing its own scheme, based partly on pre-war lines and partly on the home scheme.

As far as local circumstances permitted, education overseas was carried out on the same lines as at home. Except in large centres like Cairo, Alexandria and Jerusalem, civilian assistance was rarely available; but this handicap was largely overcome by using army resources to the largest possible extent. The following describes one or two of the features of the education schemes in some of the more important Forces abroad. In addition, considerable progress was made with small Forces like those in the Falkland Islands, the Faroes and the Caribbean area.

MIDDLE EAST

By March 1943 it was possible to report that an extremely live scheme was in operation. Despite the large size of the

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area, which included Palestine, Syria, Sudan, Egypt and, later, Libya, Malta and Cyprus, and the small Army Educational Corps Establishment, which, in December 1941, numbered only twenty-four officers and fifty other ranks, some valuable work was done. Soon after December 1941, three more divisions joined the Command, bringing with them their own Army Educational Corps officers — one to each — and seven other ranks. The total establishment then worked out to approximately one Army Educational Corps officer to every ten thousand troops and one other rank instructor to every five thousand troops.

Although the effective civilian assistance that units could obtain was very small when compared with units at home, a certain amount of help for troops in Cairo was given by the British Council, the Anglo-Egyptian Union and the Fouad I University. In Jerusalem, assistance was given by members of the staff of the Hebrew University there, while, in Beirut, the American University professors and lecturers lent their support to the army educational work. Since the civilian assistance was so small, however, reliance was mainly placed on the instructors drawn from the units themselves. Classes were held in a wide range of vocational and cultural subjects, 70 per cent of the total instruction being in languages. French was the most in demand, although there were many requests for Italian, Arabic and German. At a later date, Hindustani classes were arranged for members of the Indian Army. In September 1942 some six thousand troops were attending classes of one kind or another.

Correspondence courses on many subjects were also available and were produced in conjunction with the British Institute of Engineering Technology branches in Cairo and Jerusalem. At first provision was made only for single-subject courses of brief duration. Later, this was altered, and courses for matriculation and in preparation for professional examinations were organised. By the end of 1943, more than two thousand courses covering a hundred and

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fifty different subjects were in progress. Each soldier was allowed to take one or two courses for which he paid the cost, varying from £2 to £5. This charge was levied because of the tremendous number of applications for courses and because it was not possible to accede to them all. By making the soldier pay what was for him a large sum of money, it was possible to ensure that the correspondence courses really went to those who were most anxious to pursue them. If a soldier passed any examination which he had taken through a correspondence course, 75 per cent of the total money he had paid was refunded. One of the great difficulties that had to be faced in the early stages was the shortage of textbooks for organised classes and for students taking correspondence courses. In some cases, a year elapsed between the time the book was requested and the time it arrived in the Middle East. Later, the book supply improved considerably, and, by early 1945, there were approximately a hundred thousand volumes in the Army Educational Corps libraries scattered throughout the Middle East. There was also a well-organised central library service, whereby rarer books were kept in a central pool at General Headquarters.¹ From there they were speedily despatched — it took only two days for a book to arrive in the Sudan or in Tripolitania — to any soldier or auxiliary in the Middle East. After some time it became clear that there was a steady run on certain types of books and when a survey was made the demand was found to be as follows: general works, 5 per cent; philosophy, 5 per cent; religion, 5 per cent; sociology, 18 per cent; languages, 4 per cent; science, 9 per cent; 'useful' arts, 37 per cent; fine arts, 10 per cent; literature, 4 per cent; history and geography, 12 per cent.

A.B.C.A. pamphlets and British Way and Purpose booklets, similar to those in use at home, were reproduced locally and circulated to units while touring teams of Army Educational Corps instructors held short courses to give demonstrations of the main principles of instruction. An interesting

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feature of A.B.C.A. here was that it was well received by field force units but with little enthusiasm by the base units. Two big base units in Egypt, for example, were working at high pressure in the days before El Alamein. Their commanding officers cordially 'admitted' to the visiting Army Educational Corps officer that their job was production and that they had no time for superfluities. In spite of their wishes, these commanding officers were persuaded to allow the men in their workshops to discuss current events for half an hour each week in working hours. This was agreed to as an experiment; but when the commanding officers found that, not only did their production not decrease but that it slightly increased, the experiment remained as a permanent feature.

In some areas news digests were produced regularly, while a heavy and sustained demand for good music was met by civilian orchestras, symphony concerts, gramophone recitals and broadcasting. In the Sudan and in Cyprus, interested troops were regularly invited to the homes of civilians for music recitals. The need for places where soldiers could read and write in quiet surroundings was seen from the beginning, and by May 1943 more than a hundred and fifty educational centres had been set up, including several in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania.

One centre which attracted notice was at Tripoli, the second port of Lebanon. As most of the soldiers in and around Tripoli were forced to spend their time in overcrowded Service canteens with no possible alternative of relaxation, the local Army Educational Corps instructor decided to set up a central educational centre. With the failure of other more formal centres in mind, he determined that the centre should be a place where informal adult education might flourish in comfort and be free from convention.

Having obtained suitable premises in the main shopping street of Tripoli and having acquired furniture by honest

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appeal, the instructor then set about the decoration of "Candlelight Cottage". Official army posters were unofficially banned. When the founder's intentions were made known, "artists in the Forces contributed handsomely, both with posters and notices, decorative, humorous and always strictly non-official in character". This was the spirit in which the centre was run, and it became well known for the fellowship it radiated. In one respect "Candlelight Cottage" differed from most other educational centres. Instead of persuading people to come in, the founder exacted a membership fee of one shilling per month, the funds being used for the purchase of journals from Great Britain and the United States of America. Visitors thus automatically became members of a club which they regarded as their own and of which they were very proud. Through the library, discussions, brains trusts, competitions, tea-parties when only French might be spoken, and numerous entertainments, this venture became the true centre for one community in Tripoli. Its significance for the future was brought out when a delegation of representatives of the three radically opposed religious bodies, Orthodox, Maronite and Moslem, visited the club and asked that it should be run by the British authorities after the war as a social and educational centre for the youth of Tripoli.

Assistance was also given to units in the field in setting apart huts or tents to serve as quiet rooms or study centres; they were furnished with whatever comfort that could be provided, and this was usually very inadequate. A large number of books of a more serious nature than it is common to find in camp lines were acquired, and at each army education centre libraries came into being which tended to concentrate on current affairs. Another point of interest was that, in March 1943, two women staff officers were appointed to encourage educational activities among members of the A.T.S. who had been arriving in the Middle East during the previous year.

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Considerable attention was given to the teaching of English ; this was particularly successful in Malta (the work with the Royal Malta Artillery will be separately described). Classes in English were also held for Cypriots, Greeks, Indians, Africans, Palestinians and other troops, and special schemes of instruction were introduced in order to bring the many illiterates up to a standard that would allow them to be trained for military purposes. Later, in co-operation with the British Council, arrangements were made for providing instruction in English to Allied troops. A special establishment of teachers, at first chiefly civilians, was approved for this purpose. A year later, some fifty-five ex-schoolmaster soldiers had been transferred to the Army Educational Corps, trained in English-teaching methods, supplied with books, and attached to units and formations of the Allied Forces.

Their reception was beyond measure enthusiastic [wrote a correspondent], the more so as the majority of them were young veterans of desert warfare — and the main concern of those in control is to curb the zeal of commanding officers who would have all of their men taught English irrespective of the fourteen-hour time-table imposed on their instructors. These soldier teachers are reinforced by locally employed civilians wherever they can be found. From the experiments going on continually it is clear that whether classes are confined to an adaptation of basic English or given the freedom of direct method, English can be taught by a skilled and enthusiastic teacher without his knowing a word of the student's language and without the existence of a common medium.²

THE MIDDLE EAST SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

If any proof were needed that army education never primarily belonged to the schoolroom, the work of the Middle East School of Education might be cited. For, as its commandant wrote

Instead of summoning its students from the four corners of the Middle East to the luxury of some hutted camps in range of

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Gezira or on the plains of Palestine, it has penetrated or is routed to penetrate to every Command of the Middle East. Its staff have worked on the seashore of El Arish, within sight of the Blue Nile at Khartoum, and on the plains of Aleppo ; the 16,000 miles that it has covered have taken the School through eight countries, from the shadow of Hamemat to the glare of Baghdad ; and, until recently, when they acquired the regular use of a utility waggon, their transport ranged from the luxury of an American freight plane to the discomfort of a three-ton meat lorry.³

The School had been formed in June 1942, to train unit education officers on the same lines as those followed at the Army School of Education at Wakefield. The syllabus was very similar to that pursued in Britain, with modifications and alterations to suit different circumstances of the Middle East ; the unit education officers were given an outline of the army education scheme, background information about current affairs, and hints on the general principles of instruction. According to the commandant,

the personnel attending were for the most part keen and appreciative, and the results achieved proved, in retrospect, that much good had been derived from the School's peregrinations, although the numbers attending fell on some occasions far short of the figure desired.³

Besides these courses, the staff of the School gave numerous evening lectures to any units that were near and who cared to invite them ; this was a valuable means of keeping contact with the ideas and conceptions of the men in the field. Interspersed with the courses were two lecture tours, of which the second with the Eighth Army on the eve of El Alamein offensive was received with unparalleled enthusiasm by the seventy audiences who listened to the talks of which they themselves had chosen the subject. At the end of the first tour, the character of the School's work changed, and its scope broadened as the experimental origins hardened to become a successful *fait accompli*. So the School embarked on a much more ambitious programme —

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of making units A B C A-conscious by holding courses of two and a half days' duration for junior officers at any convenient local centres where enough units were stationed. Many difficulties of the early days were eradicated and the School flourished in the possession of its own transport, a condition which permitted the carrying of considerable apparatus and paraphernalia. This was made up of various visual aids and consisted of a series of charts, maps, posters and diagrams which had been prepared by the School staff. Here simplicity was the keynote, and, in the Commandant's words, consisted of

outline maps in two colours with no complicated physical features or elaborate details to mislead the readers ; simple block and circle methods of illustrating proportion to " put over " the ever-increasing mass of modern statistics , charts on plain paper to simplify the concept of government ; wall quizzes composed of photographs cut out of periodicals, aeroplane silhouettes from cheap pamphlets, or snippets of old atlases ; the day's news taped to an outline map of the battle-front with coloured ribbons, changed each day ; the headline news of the day pasted to a board with a coloured flash for the particular front to which the item refers³

In the first year of the School's existence, its staff, which had never been larger than four and was usually only three and sometimes two in number, conducted thirty-four courses, made two lecture tours and delivered more than a hundred and fifty lectures to units. During that period, more than six hundred and fifty students passed through the School, representative of all branches of the Army, and including a small number of Royal Air Force and Royal Navy officers, as well as members of the Free French Forces.

THE EIGHTH ARMY

The arrival of a command education officer at Eighth Army in September 1942 was, on the face of it, ill-timed,

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since everyone's thoughts and energies were mainly directed to the imminent military offensive which was planned to begin at the end of October. From his initial visits, however, the command education officer became convinced that education could be of real service to any army operating in the desert, not only in providing relief from the monotony and boredom of desert life, but also in helping to keep alive interest in home and outside affairs generally. This view was confirmed by a visit that the Middle East School of Education made to one division of the Eighth Army early in October. The work that could be done by this travelling School was small, however, and it was clear that material would have to be provided whereby more talks could be given and more discussions organised.

The receipt of any publications from outside the Army could never be relied upon — a fact which became more and more true with every mile of westward advance — and, in any event, with such heavy operational commitments, few officers had the time to 'read up' subjects for discussions or talks. The command education officer therefore decided to prepare a series of lecture summaries which could be used with the minimum of preparation by those interested. He chose subjects of both a general educational interest, for example: "The British Empire: What it is and How it Works", and also those of a purely local interest, for example, "The History of Egypt, Libya and Barbary". These summaries proved most popular and, at the end of the journey westwards, the main ones were produced in booklet form and issued on request. Similarly, to provide material for the lighter and more informal activities, lists of words for spelling bees and questions for quizzes were prepared and given to those who asked for them.

Publicity for the varying phases of the educational scheme was obtained by printing articles from time to time in the Eighth Army's weekly newspaper, *The Crusader*. In this way, such things as the availability of correspondence

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courses, provision of text-books and facilities for taking examinations like London matriculation were advertised throughout the Army, and a surprisingly large number of queries from individuals and units was received. By the time the Eighth Army had reached Enfidaville, for example, ninety-seven applications for correspondence courses had been received by the command education officer, despite the fact that the difficulties of continuing correspondence courses in the desert had been pointed out to each individual applicant. Again, through the medium of *The Crusader*, a poetry competition was organised, and, in two months, 403 poems were received from 276 competitors. An essay competition was similarly organised, though not with quite the same success.

All this was taking place while the Army was moving. Soon Egypt and Cyrenaica were cleared of the enemy, and it became possible to develop more static and continuous educational schemes in certain centres. The first opportunity came with the opening of a leave and rest camp at Derna and here some valuable work was done. At this centre it was possible to provide not only recreational education by means of quizzes, brains trusts, music recitals and the like, but also to interest men straight from battle in talks and discussions based on the news of the moment. News had been scarce in the desert, and every opportunity was taken when the men were withdrawn from the fighting to satisfy the insatiable thirst for knowing what was going on.⁴ While the biggest demand from the troops was for news, music and informal activities, regular series of talks and classes were arranged and an educational advice bureau performed invaluable service. At Benghazi, an Army Educational Corps warrant officer worked on similar lines to those at Derna, and proved that education was far from out of place in this active theatre of war. Before long, the Eighth Army had passed out of Cyrenaica; but educational services were still actively sought. The next big centre in

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which education could be developed was Tripoli, and there, because of what it had already achieved in Cyrenaica, provision was made at the outset for an educational centre on a generous scale in the Union Club, the heart of the city so far as the soldier was concerned. Here classrooms, lecture rooms, a library and offices were all made available. At first there was a shortage of staff, but, later, extra staff was secured and various activities were developed.

By the middle of 1943 it was possible to write that the number of educational programmes in operation was at its greatest. With the conclusion of hostilities in North Africa, and a re-grouping of units and formations around Tripoli, the demands for lectures, text-books, maps and other materials exceeded all expectations. These were met so far as possible, and sometimes lecturers from the English Department of the Fouad I University, Cairo, were flown to Tripoli to conduct lecture tours in the area. An interesting development in June 1943 was that it was possible to hold in Tripoli the June London Matriculation and City and Guilds examinations of the London Institute. A big scheme of organised and continuous discussions was also launched among the main formations to meet a demand which, according to the official report, had seldom been so spontaneous. When, therefore, at the end of the North African campaign, the services of "Education" were especially requested for the Sicilian invasion and beyond, it seemed reasonable to suppose that the Cinderella of the Services had contributed something of real worth to an army on active service.

Early in August 1943, "Education" went to Sicily. In many ways this was an altogether fresh start. In Africa, the Eighth Army had been able to draw upon the Middle East Command for supplies of books and equipment but now they became comparatively scarce again. Fortunately, those in charge of the scheme were again able to call on the Middle East Command for aid, while they were also helped by the fact that hard circumstance had taught them the need for

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carrying their own materials, snail-like, on their backs. The education officer reported :

Lecture notes on the background to Sicily, and, later, Italy, were again prepared, booklets of quizz competitions were distributed, and attempts were made to get all the usual activities started. In the University building of Catania, a wing was taken over and once more became a centre of considerable activity. But the days in Sicily were comparatively fleeting and, four days after the Reggio landings, in early September, we crossed over to the Italian mainland.⁴

The work of providing educational opportunities for the troops went over to the mainland too.

THE ROYAL MALTA ARTILLERY

When the Italian planes made their first flight over Malta in June 1940, to scatter their bombs, the representatives of the Army Educational Corps, with one exception, forsook education and became cipher clerks, working under the command education officer, who had become chief cipher officer. "The one exception", wrote an Army Educational Corps warrant officer, "was an Instructor, A.E.C., who left his children's school teaching, and, for the first time in his A.E.C. career, began to look after the education of recruits."⁵ He found it a change, especially as the recruits were Maltese ; they had joined the colours for service with the Royal Malta Artillery.* For the next two and a half years he continued

* The Royal Malta Artillery has a history dating from 1799, when the first Maltese troops were enlisted as an organised group under the British flag. When war broke out in 1939, this peace-time regiment of five batteries became part of the garrison of Malta, taking its place in the coastal defence of the island. Other anti-aircraft regiments, search-light, coast and corresponding defence batteries were then formed. At the beginning of 1941, compulsory military service was introduced and enabled the regiments and batteries to be made up to strength. Malta was thus fitted to play its part in the action which followed, and which culminated in the sustained and heavy air attacks, as well as the attacks by E-boats on the Grand Harbour during July 1941.

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to attend to the educational needs of the many thousands of recruits who either volunteered or were conscripted into this regiment.

The main educational problem with Maltese troops was that of illiteracy. Arrangements made by the Government of Malta for the education of the children were inadequate to cope with the large and increasing population. The result was that half the children reached manhood or womanhood without learning to read or write in either Maltese or English. Further, many of those who had been fortunate enough to go to school had been handicapped by the changing policy of the Government with regard to the teaching of languages. At one time, even in the elementary schools, Italian was taught as well as English, while, today, very little English is taught in the lower grades, the grades at which many of the boys leave school. The extent of the illiterate problem can thus readily be understood, as can the difficulties of the Army in training soldiers who, on enlistment, could neither read, write, nor, sometimes speak, English.

It is a tribute, therefore, to the Royal Malta Artillery that educational work never wholly ceased throughout the siege, although at times it had to be considerably curtailed. Recruiting was continuous, and education in general subjects was regularly provided at the Depot for every intake. An interesting observation was that the system of teaching was centred round a course of Basic English which had been devised by the then command education officer, Major H. R. Toomey, and his staff before the War.

Prior to May 1941, the only educational activities in progress were those for recruits at the Depot. In this month another Army Educational Corps instructor was released from his non-educational duties and posted to the fort on the Valetta side of the Grand Harbour. The active support of the commanding officer was secured, and it was not long before every coastal battery had regular classes in operation to carry on the work that had been started at the Depot. The

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extension of educational activities to these coastal batteries was handicapped by the shortage of instructors and soon courses were being organised to select and refresh potential instructors. Although they were only of a fortnight's duration, the courses did much in helping instructors to tackle the difficult problem of teaching illiterates.

This description of work with the Royal Malta Artillery may best be left by quoting one correspondent, who wrote .

An epic could be written of the work of the Army Educational Corps in organising English teaching and the reduction of illiteracy among the Maltese regiments in their island fortress during the past four years. Like all stories from Malta, it is one of courage and resolution in the face of unbelievable difficulties. The bald statement that the percentage of illiteracy in one of the regiments had been reduced from over 70 to less than 30 gives no hint of this, but shows the limited extent that enemy operations were allowed to interfere with steady routine work ¹

Even then this account is incomplete, for, in spite of every difficulty, the army children's schools in Malta continued to function throughout the whole of the siege. Here the greatest tribute must be paid to those members of the Corps of Queen's Army Schoolmistresses, who, despite sleepless nights, days of severe strain, lack of materials, shortage of food and demolished schools — all the schools suffered partial or complete destruction in heavy air raids — carried on with their duties so assiduously that " the children maintained throughout the siege, mental alertness and a confident bearing " ² Besides their influence on the mental balance of the children, there was ample proof that the courageous behaviour of the Queen's Army Schoolmistresses added fortitude to the already strong spirit of the parents.

Conditions in Malta have been such that the Army has set the educational standard and the civilians have followed some time later. The work achieved by the Royal Malta Artillery during the siege has helped to quicken this process, and it is a good portent for the future that the general officer

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commanding the Royal Artillery in Malta has been elected a member of the Board of Education of the Maltese Government. The first officer to represent British service interests was Major-General C. T. Beckett.

EAST AFRICA

The East African Army Educational Corps was born on February 6, 1942, and owes its origin to the enthusiasm and interest of the then general officer commanding-in-chief, Lieut.-General Sir William Platt. After the East African campaign had been brought to a successful close, it seemed, for the most part, that the troops remaining would be employed on routine tasks and garrison duties and that in consequence life would become monotonous and empty. For many the contrary was the case. Within a short time of its origin, a steadily growing educational force was making its influence increasingly felt upon the lives of many thousands of Africans and almost every European in the East African Command.⁶

From the first it had been realised that the considerable number of officers and non-commissioned officers who were sent to East Africa from Britain required careful and immediate teaching on the vast subject of 'Africa' in order to help them to understand their surroundings, and, most important, to make the proper contact with the African soldiers with whom they would have to work. For these Europeans, special courses were arranged and won praise from all who attended. The main educational task that had to be carried out for the African soldier was teaching him English. The policy was described by General Platt when opening a school which had been devised for training soldier schoolmasters: "I want you to teach these Africans to speak better English and these Englishmen to speak better Swahili. When that is done, I am sure they will know far

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more about each other and get on much better." For the African, this teaching of English was not the only duty that had to be undertaken. The scheme to provide schoolmasters for battalions, for example, could not, under war conditions, be expected to give the ordinary *askari* a 'finished' education, but it did much to counteract many of those influences upon the life and outlook of the African soldier with which he and his fellows would have to cope with the return of peace. And schoolmasters were not the only product. In training African artisans to be mechanics, signallers and craftsmen in many trades, the Army was not only making itself more powerful and efficient, but was also fitting these men to play a more useful and inspiring part in the life of these Colonies after the War.

The school for the training of battalion schoolmasters was opened at the former Jeanes School at Kabete in Kenya. The staff consisted of men from Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Nyasaland, with intimate knowledge of African administration and education and with the ability to speak several African tongues. They had the advantage not only of having worked beside their students in times of peace but also of having fought with them in the East African campaign. At Kabete, the educational centre was divided into two wings — European and African — and the work in each had a different aim. In the European wing, the object of the month's course was to teach officers and non-commissioned officers from Britain to speak Swahili, the *lingua franca* of the East African Forces, to make them acquainted with the general geographical, historical and sociological background of East Africa, and the place of East Africa and themselves in the present war. The officer in charge of the scheme wrote :

It was quickly realised that a special teacher's book in Swahili was necessary to suit the needs of such a course. Shortage of supply and unsuitability of the standard works such as Steere's Swahili Exercises, although most valuable for reference, necessitated us producing our own book. This was first done in type-

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script and used for teaching for two or three courses, alterations, corrections, and additions being made in conference at the end of each course, until a degree of finality was reached, when the book was submitted to Command Headquarters, who approved of an edition of 10,000 copies. The first batch of 1000 copies have arrived and are in circulation.

By June 1943, seven courses had been completed. Of the 410 British officers and non-commissioned officers who had been through the school, 248 of them passed the 'leaving' examination which had been introduced. Later, many of these passed the Lower Swahili examination.*

The object of the African wing was not only to teach the native pupils to speak better English but also to fit them by a comprehensive and intensive course, lasting approximately two months, to be schoolmasters capable of conducting and organising the educational facilities of a whole battalion. In peace-time, the great difficulty in expanding East African education had been the dearth of teachers. The establishment of the Jeanes School at Kabete had helped to solve the problem for the civil administration. Now it was helping to seek a solution for the whole of the East African Military Command. Since the African Army is very largely illiterate, one readily grasps the immensity of the problem. The African personnel at first were largely recruited from civilians exhibiting all grades of educational experience and training.

* There are three Swahili examinations laid down in regulations: an oral examination which is compulsory for all British ranks in contact with African troops, a Lower Swahili examination (both written and oral) for the passing of which a bonus of £10 is given, and a Higher Swahili giving a bonus of £20. Because Swahili is a language superimposed upon the vernacular of nearly all African troops, there is a vast difference of quality in the Swahili spoken in different battalions. This ranges from a few odd words understood by units recruited in Nyasaland or Uganda to the really 'highbrow' Swahili which is spoken by some Tanganyika battalions. As a compromise to those who stood either for the 'pidgin' or 'highbrow' type, the simplest grammar possible was produced, having a vocabulary and exercises suitable for war-time needs. Learners were thus given a foundation which, through their own exertions, could rise to the 'highbrow' or descend to the 'pidgin'.

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Some had teaching experience, some had taken teacher-training courses and some had reached Makerere College, the highest African educational centre in East Africa, to which Cambridge School Certificate is the entrance examination. The interest shown by the local students was indicated by one visiting officer who wrote :

1

Special credit is due to the Africans for the way in which they have organised their Information Room and Library — including news bulletins and maps in Swahili and Chinyanja. It is a pleasure to have been allowed to witness a difficult educational duty being tackled so cheerfully by all concerned.⁷

In the early stages it was not known what use commanding officers would make of these battalion schoolmasters, nor what opportunities they would get for organised teaching. Since, therefore, there could be no indication of what subjects would be most useful, it was decided to run the first series of courses on an experimental basis

The introductory lectures were devoted to hints on methods and techniques of instruction and were followed by instruction on those military subjects like 'security' and map-reading, which are usually omitted from specific military training programmes. Further lessons were given on history and geography with special reference to those events which have taken place since the First World War. Another subject which, for want of a better name, was called "Land and Home Betterment" included talks on the use and preservation of land, the prevention of soil erosion, crop cultivation, pests and diseases, cattle management, health and disease and the cleanliness of the homestead. This course was intended to give the students a sound background which they could pass on to the troops, helping to fit them for their return to civilian life on the land. It was followed up by a further course on co-operation and toleration, dealing with such topics as co-operative marketing of goods, communal use and care of tools, and good-neighbourliness between coloured and

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white. The instructional periods in "Land and Home Betterment" were supported by visits to veterinary laboratories, to the Medical Hygiene School, to *shambas* and to eroded areas.

The first three courses were attended by fifteen, forty and sixty members respectively, and later the numbers increased to well over a hundred. During the course all teachers held the local unpaid ranks of lance-corporal; their rank on leaving was determined by their efficiency, powers of leadership, teaching ability, and general examination results in a 'trade' test. The best few would go out as serjeants, but the majority went out as corporals until they had had some experience in the field. On posting from the school, each soldier-schoolmaster would be provided with a limited amount of equipment. This consisted of a blackboard and easel, sets of Basic English readers, maps of the war areas, a few Italian exercise-books, a small library of simple English and Swahili books (value £1), which were supplied by 'Welfare'. Later a £5 package of books, half being in Swahili and half in English, were sent to units who had African educational instructors on their strength; these formed a small library for the information room. The schoolrooms often consisted of the shade of a large tree in the bush. From the first, moreover, it was realised that, since the work that these African teachers were trying to do was new not only to them but also to commanding officers, methods had to be devised for keeping the instructors in touch with those responsible for organising the whole scheme. For this purpose, four officers were appointed whose duty it was continually to tour the units to which the teachers were attached, reporting on their work, advising commanding officers how to make the best use of them, and, at the same time, keeping their eyes open for possible recruits, either from the Army or from civilian schools with which they came in contact.

Another method of keeping the educational non-com-

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missioned officers in the picture was by means of a fortnightly news-letter which was sent out from the command headquarters. The letter consisted of news of existing courses and messages from other teachers, lecture notes on current affairs, and latest news of importance that might not have been heard by teachers to whom wireless was unavailable. With the letter was sent out material like pictures, periodicals or posters which would be suitable for information rooms. Many of these African teachers became quite proficient. One, teaching in a field works school, took the same examination as British officers and non-commissioned officers and obtained the highest marks. One unit requested that their educational non-commissioned officer should be appointed battery serjeant-major as he had shown outstanding gifts of leadership. Many of the non-commissioned officers were used for teaching Swahili to British troops, and for translating gunnery teaching to African recruits in training.

The genuine interest of the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief was shown by his visits to every European course save one (when he was carrying out his successful operations in Madagascar). General Platt also visited each African course and listened to the students doing their "practice teaching".

Beside the activities already described, the East African Army Educational Corps had various other functions to perform. These included the organisation and teaching in evening classes in Swahili for British personnel stationed in units around Nairobi, broadcasting diverse programmes in many languages, publishing weekly a Swahili newspaper called *Askari*, and running 'potted' courses in English for African members of the Pioneer Corps. The diversity of these interests is itself sufficient example of the broad conception of adult education which was possessed by its sponsors in the East African Command.

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INDIA

The progress of army education in India before the outbreak of the Second World War has already been mentioned (see p. 83). With the coming of hostilities, problems were presented which could only be solved by slowing down educational training. The School of Education at Belgaum ceased to have a British Service wing, the Indian wing was reduced to one-third of its normal output, and a proportion of the Army Educational Corps was diverted to other and more urgent war duties. This phase lasted only a few months. When the Army began to expand, it became clear that education was more than ever essential to the process of turning Indian recruits into efficient soldiers.

The Certificate system of pre-war days [wrote Colonel Russell Jones] had been maintained intact, but with the shortening of the period of training, it became necessary to unload the syllabuses and concentrate on war essentials. The percentage of educated recruits dropped sharply and continued to fall steadily as the numbers enrolled increased. It was necessary to devise quickly a system whereby thousands of unlettered men could be fitted for military instruction in a minimum space of time.⁸

The first problem that had to be decided was the language of instruction. Urdu had been the army language for a long period; training manuals had been translated into it, and there was a fair number of instructors who would be capable of teaching it, and since Roman characters were essential to meet the needs of many kinds of military training, it was decided that the first subject to be taught should be Roman Urdu, and that this should then become the mode of instruction. To meet the demands of modern war, it was decided that the other compulsory subjects should be mathematics and map-reading. The decision to include these three subjects was communicated to the Army on July 2, 1940, in a directive called "Educational Training, Indian

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Army in War". In this directive, the aims of the training were said to be, first, to produce competent fighting men in the minimum time, and, secondly, to produce from the best of such soldiers, leaders and specialists. It was clearly stated that time would not permit of Indian ranks being given the more general education that was customary in peace-time, while the shortage of instructors would have to be met by training them more quickly.

The Indian Army Special and First Class Examinations were to retain their existing syllabuses as standards for candidates for commissions, while, for the sake of efficiency, all English examinations were also to continue. Although the abandonment of the Second and Third Class Indian Army certificates was considered, it was decided that they should be retained because they assisted in the selection for promotion, and proved an incentive to educational effort. As in Malta, the average Indian recruit, whether Moslem, Sikh, Hindu, Mahratta, Rajput, Dogra, Bengali or Indian Christian, was, for all practical purposes, illiterate. Since the teaching of illiterates was recognised as being one of peculiar skill, it was agreed that the most competent instructors should be sent to training units.

To meet the shortage of instructors, the School of Education was expanded in July 1940, and was supplemented by the formation of four new schools in the Northern, Eastern and Southern Commands, and in the Western Independent District. As the Army grew, so the schools were enlarged to keep pace with the demand. By May 1942, some 2640 Urdu instructors and 415 English instructors were being trained annually. Further, it became clear quite early in this development that, to ease the fighting man-power situation as much as possible, civilians would have to be employed as educational instructors. These were engaged on a full-time basis and were graduates of recognised Indian universities or people with equivalent qualifications. They received payment at the rate of Rs. 60 a month as well as free accommoda-

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tion. On engagement, the civilian schoolmasters were required to attend a short course to study the methods of teaching ; they were granted the usual terms : " During this period an amount of 5/- will be deducted from their pay ". Moreover, besides the training of instructors for formal education and the teaching of English, these schools also developed ' current affairs ' wings which were organised on lines similar to the school at Ranchi (see p. 264).

The despatch of Indian expeditionary forces to operational theatres of war overseas created new educational problems. At first it was thought that all educational training would have to be abandoned ; but soon it became apparent that both a need and an opportunity had arisen in back areas among troops not actually committed to active warfare. At the request of General Headquarters, Middle East, it was decided to continue educational training in Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Iraq and Persia for Indian troops stationed in these countries, the general policy being controlled by General Headquarters, India.* An education officer was added to the staff of the Middle East Command and three educational teams, consisting of a British officer, a British warrant officer, a *subadar* and four *jemadars*, were sent overseas in June 1942, to act as mobile schools for training instructors. Educational training thus became continuous and covered the extent of the Indian Army, wherever the men were stationed. No statistics can be quoted to show its development, but the way in which the instructor problem was tackled gives a clear indication of the official attitude towards the value of educa-

* General Claude Auchinleck was, at that time, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in the Middle East and, in a letter which he wrote to the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief in India, General Wavell, he stated " Service in the Middle East and contact with men of other nations has developed and changed the Indian soldier's outlook. I consider that it is of the utmost importance that this awakened interest be guided into channels which will be useful in good and stable government. . . The war-time education scheme is full of detailed ideas as to what can be done, and in my view they are sound ideas, which, if carried out, promise India a rich dividend in the future."

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tion in making more efficient soldiers, and, later, better members of the civilian community.

The contribution that army education was making to the Indian welfare by 1945 was discussed by one correspondent in *The Times Educational Supplement*.⁹ He related that whilst most Indian villages were self-supporting and, in normal times, exported food to the towns, this food was produced by the sweat and toil of the peasants and by little else. Their methods were laborious, clumsy and antiquated ; they knew little of hygiene, medicine, scientific crop-farming or the proper care of livestock, and were slavishly subservient to custom and superstition. Even more fundamental an obstacle to change was the widespread attitude of mind which took no interest in progress at all.

The first duty at the training centre was to train the recruit for literacy, and here, besides the more formal training in Urdu, mathematics and map-reading, he was introduced to a wider field of knowledge which was designed to make him a better citizen when he returned to his village. This education in citizenship was not an 'extra'. At least one (and generally more) full period in each week's training was set aside for it. "The arrangement for these periods", continued the correspondent, "ensure that they will not be monologues delivered by a bored officer to a bored audience. They are essentially group discussions." Material for discussion was provided by the Directorate of Education at General Headquarters, India, in two series of pamphlets, one dealing with social and economic reforms at home, the other with current affairs generally. These were reinforced by large 'map reviews', pictorial displays, posters and illustrated journals, which were issued as visual aids.

In the field, of course, the elaborate programmes run at training centres could not be continued. But deep inside Burma, in Italy, and in remote outposts in Persia, Iraq,

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Africa, and on the frontiers of India itself, the Sepoy found that opportunities for learning were still with him.

In jungle clearings, during lulls in the campaign, he takes part in group discussions on subjects which must often seem remote. In tents and bamboo *bashas*, in blitzed buildings recently wrested from the Japanese, even on tree trunks, he sees the big 'map reviews' and posters that he has known back at his depot. The army brings mobile cinemas right up to the front to give him instruction mixed with entertainment; it must be remembered that to many of these men the cinema itself is completely novel. And whenever a tent or *basha* can be spared for recreation and instruction, illustrated magazines and newspapers are spread for him to read.

The foregoing remarks have applied mainly to Indian troops. At the outbreak of war, the War Office decided that, for British troops in India, the existing system of educational certificates was unsuitable and they were immediately suspended. With the publication of the Haining Committee's Report in September 1940, the scheme of "Education in the War-time Army", which was introduced for all British troops at home, was also made applicable to British troops in India. The main provisions of the report have already been described (p. 100). For India, however, there was one extra and significant recommendation — the introduction of proficiency certificates. These were described in a directive of June 1941, which stated that there was

need for a graduated system of general and military education which will be organised in classes studying for a series of certificates. These will be three in number, and will be known as the Third, Second and First Class Proficiency Certificates, India. The subjects to be taught will be those of proved general and military value and will be three in number, English, Mathematics and Map-reading.

The introduction of these certificates proved a real boon to the soldier who was anxious to improve his 'paper' qualifications.

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The general scheme developed much along the same lines as it had done in Great Britain, except that there was much less civilian help and the Army was thrown back more and more on its own resources. Thus, instead of all-civilian lecture panels as in Great Britain, the command lecture panel consisted of regimental and staff officers as well as civilians. They provided British units with lectures of general interest, especially units in out-stations. British Way and Purpose booklets and A.B.C.A. pamphlets were reprinted in India, additional matter being added to satisfy the interests of men serving in that country.

One officer wrote that a telling factor in favour of civic education in India was the intensified interest which British soldiers took in home affairs. "Nostalgia of the British troops", he declared, "properly directed and exploited by the platoon commander, has proved a powerful stimulant to discussions on the past, present and future of Britain, which are the very pith and marrow of 'British Way and Purpose' " ¹⁰ There different tactics were used in the organisation of British Way and Purpose sessions, the men reading the current pamphlet before proceeding to discussions on it. Besides the pamphlet, the platoon commander was provided with an instructor's guide, which suggested lines on which the discussion might be run. Using this method, Lieut.-Colonel E. C. Gould stated that "British Way and Purpose discussions in India are in consequence more lively, informed and sustained than their counterparts in British units serving anywhere else". On active service in Burma and elsewhere, this compulsory scheme was modified and cyclostyled news-sheets were rushed to forward areas.

The scope of voluntary activities depended very largely on the situation in which the unit found itself. Units stationed near big towns, for example, had approximately the same facilities as those at home; thus, local units in Ceylon were able to send 320 British soldiers on courses in engineering and commercial subjects to the Ceylon Technical

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College. Some units near Calcutta sent their men to classes in still-life, drawing, handicrafts and sculpture at local art schools. The attention paid to literary and musical activities at the Army School of Education (India) also stimulated many British units to set aside at least one hour a week for these pursuits. A development along lines that had proved successful at home was the setting-up of a Current Affairs School at Ranchi in the foothills of the Himalayas in the United Provinces. Here courses were held for commanding officers, regimental officers (British and Indian), Women's Auxiliary Corps (Indian) officers and army chaplains to demonstrate the principles of A.B.C.A. and British Way and Purpose, with special reference to discussion group leading.* Vacancies at this School were given to the Fourteenth Army; W.A.C.(I) discussion groups presented more difficulties than at home with the A.T.S. A group at Ranchi, for example, often consisted of Gurkha signal girls, naturally shy and inarticulate and possessing little knowledge of English; but when they were encouraged to speak they were found to possess decided views on matters affecting them.

In the Indian Wing of the School similar courses were arranged for senior *havildars* and *jemadars*. The courses were taken in Urdu, and the 'Current Affairs' pamphlets used were printed in English and Roman Urdu.

In addition to the general scheme of education and that of the Proficiency Certificates, other aspects of education in India continued to flourish. These were the British Army's children schools, which maintained their work on the

* The objective in both the British and Indian Wings was to provide trained discussion group leaders on the basis of one per platoon, and, since it was found to have particularly great appeal for Indian troops, the dramatic method of presentation was developed at the School. One of the noteworthy productions of the staff of the School was a two-hour dramatic performance which portrayed the principles of citizenship and patriotism, the importance of basic and cultural education, and the necessity for sanitation and hygiene in the villages. The performance achieved such good results that it was later decided to send the participants on tour throughout the command.

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familiar lines (see p. 89). Officers commissioned from the ranks were permitted to enter their children, and, in some schools, 'middle' and 'commercial' classes were organised for elder girls and boys. Authority was also given allowing children from certain schools to sit for the School Certificate. In September 1940 an Indian cadre of army schoolmistresses was inaugurated.

Although some difficulty was experienced in keeping them up to strength, the three King George's Royal Indian Military Schools remained at full establishment, the School at Jullundur being expanded to accommodate a hundred extra pupils between the ages of fifteen and seventeen, and similar expansions were foreshadowed at Jhelum and Ajmer. Selected boys from these three schools were admitted for a year's course to Kitchener College at Nowgong, after which they proceeded to an officer's training school before they were granted commissions into the Army.

An interesting point about these schools is that in them many of the old and apparently irreconcilable religious differences of India have broken down. When they attend the schools, Hindus, Moslems, Sikhs and other races are treated in exactly the same way. They do the same work in the same rooms at the same time; they share the dormitories, and, even more remarkable, eat the same food. The surprising feature of these revolutionary but, apparently, unnoticed changes is that, according to Army Educational Corps personnel who have served on the staffs of the schools, no trouble or difficulties of any major kind have occurred.

BURMA

With the formation of the Fourteenth Army, education officers, Viceroy's commissioned officers, warrant officers and serjeant instructors were attached to appropriate formations and units. In the early days, when the Fourteenth

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Army was, in addition to its operational role, responsible for the administration of all territory east of the river Brahmaputra, an educational wing was opened at the Army Training Centre, Shillong, to train Indian educational instructors. Here, as it was described by an Army Educational Corps warrant officer,

experiments were carried out in order to relate the sepoy's educational training with his life as soldier, citizen and individual. Discussion groups, music and the drama were made an integral part of the fabric of education. A special feature was made of visits to places of interest, such as dairy, fruit and vegetable farms, technical schools, training colleges for teachers, reservoirs, village industries and the Assam Provincial Legislative Assembly.

As a result of these courses, many Indian instructors became prepared to join hands with members of the Army Educational Corps in carrying out educational activities when military operations began.

In the field itself, great difficulties had to be faced which were peculiar to the Burma front. The distances were vast — the Burma front was half as long as the Russian front — communications were bad or non-existent, and, as is well known, formations were frequently dependent on air lift for everything. Overworked staffs were forced to concentrate on essentials like reinforcements and supplies. Culture had no place under those conditions.

But, as in other campaigns, an opportunity came whereby the Army Educational Corps could show that they, too, had an important job to do under active service conditions. During the siege of Imphal in the summer of 1944 an urgent telegram was received at Fourteenth Army Headquarters, asking for an education officer to be flown in. This officer published the first daily news-sheet in this theatre. It was called the *Manipur Mail* and was the forerunner of other daily news-sheets which were to be produced in the field until they were superseded by the magnificent daily newspaper called *S.E.A.C.* which was published for troops in

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South-East Asia Command. Every day throughout the Burma campaign *SE A.C.* was dropped from the air to British and Indian troops in the mountains, jungles and paddy-fields of the battle line. Its effect on morale needs no underlining.

While the Japanese were attempting their drive into India through Kohima and Imphal, established lines of communication had been set up in Assam. This facilitated the distribution of pamphlets and information and, at the same time, gave increasing opportunities for educational work in the more static units and amongst troops in reinforcement camps. The activities of the Japanese, however, like their advance to within thirty miles of Sulchar, interfered with many a flourishing discussion group. A feature of the area at the time was the abundance of information rooms, both semi-static and mobile.

Then came the famous drive of the Fourteenth Army through Burma. The first number of a news-sheet called the *Jungle Times* was published in the notorious Kahan Valley and was kept in production up to the occupation of Rangoon, when it became the *Burma Star*. As conditions allowed, the always-popular brains trusts, quizzes, discussion groups and classical concerts were held. Ironically, one of the most popular concerts was a gramophone recital of Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado*, played under a brilliant moon beneath the ruins of a monastery destroyed by the Japanese. As the Army pushed on to Rangoon, small study centres with picturesque names like "The Manipur University", "The Maungdaw Arms", kindly lent by 'Toc H' in the Arakan, and the "Monewa News and Views Club" were set up and left behind with the advance of the Army. In Rangoon itself it became possible to recommence those activities which had been in progress before the great Burma campaign had begun.

The spirit in which educational work was tackled during this campaign may be seen by looking at a typical day in the

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life of an Army Educational Corps instructor. It went something like this :

" Stand to " half an hour before dawn with a Sten or Bren gun ; at sunrise a wash in a nearby stream, then, after collecting two days' rations, a journey in a truck, in company with a Viceroy commissioned officer instructor, to visit an Indian unit, possibly twenty miles away. On arrival at the unit, the V.C.O. would conduct a discussion with Indian other ranks, while the Serjeant Instructor held an English class with technical troops like signallers, who required this knowledge for their battle task. So on to the next unit, this time possibly a British one ; here war news would be given showing the up-to-date position on all fronts, followed by discussions on such subjects as " The Beveridge Plan ", " The Post-War World " or " Russia ". Help would be given in setting up news-rooms, sometimes literally cut out of hillsides, or fashioned out of bamboo and tarpaulins. After that the A.E.C. team passed on, possibly crossing a river in a sampan to spend the night with another unit. These nights were very often disturbed by Jap jitter parties."

In Burma, as in Britain, army educationists had shown that they were capable of adapting themselves to meet the pressing need and fill the immediate moment. The work was not always successful. In many areas the attitude of both senior and junior officers prevented anything from being attempted. The surprising fact remains that, under almost impossible conditions, something was attempted and at least a little was done.

After the war with Germany had ended and the Japanese had been thrown out of Burma it was decided that the Central Advisory Council should arrange for special visiting lecturers to be flown from Britain to South-East Asia Command. One of us (L. J. F. B.) accepted an invitation to go, and had a valuable opportunity of studying army education in the field. Lectures, brains trusts, etc., were given to British, African and Indian troops. The response of the troops was magnificent and certainly convinced the lecturer that his long journey had been worth while, but it was

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brought home to him as never before how much depends on the goodwill and interest of senior officers, no matter how well-organised matters are at headquarters. Some senior officers were so enthusiastic that one found oneself cheerfully worked almost to a standstill ; others were complacent and sometimes even hostile, thus rendering the work, voluntarily undertaken, doubly hard

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Chapter Sixteen

The British Liberation Army

THE work of the Army Educational Corps with Twenty-First Army Group began before D Day, that is, before June 6, 1944. While the armies of liberation were collecting and preparing in the South of England for the invasion of Europe, the Army Educational Corps was given the job of organising the entertainment and welfare of a vast array of British assault troops. One Army Educational Corps officer was attached to the headquarters of each marshalling area, and one Army Educational Corps and one Army Physical Training Corps instructor to each camp. When they joined the marshalling areas on April 15, 1944, they had only vague ideas of what they were expected to do. On seeking advice about their terms of reference, they were informed that their duties would consist of "assisting and advising on all matters concerning welfare, cinemas, wireless, concert parties, indoor games, topical talks and discussions, libraries, rest-rooms, newspapers, etc.", and co-operation with the physical training staff for organised games.

So the instructors were assembled for a briefing session, and were issued with a carefully thought-out pack of useful articles, including a roller blackboard, song sheets, playlets, gum arabic, chalk, selected pamphlets and maps. (Events proved that the pack had indeed been well thought out, although a hammer and nails would have been more than useful on many occasions.) The way in which the Army Educational Corps seized its new opportunities was described by one of the officers in charge of the work at a marshalling area which was run jointly by British and American staffs :

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When we arrived in the camps every man was working overtime in order to fix the primary things such as tents, water, cooking, etc. The first job of the A E C man was to fix up a cinema tent and a stage for "live" shows. Usually he did it himself. For a week or so, A E C. and P.T. worked alone, but in the second week the U.S. Special Service took over the cinema entirely. Gradually every camp perfected its auditorium, and at least three of these canvas theatres became most artistic. One was highly complimented by Miss Gertrude Lawrence, who played in it¹

The second duty was the establishment of a library. Parcels of selected books were supplied by 'Welfare', and equal quantities were supplied by the American Special Service Division. A generous free issue of newspapers reached every camp each morning and these had to be properly distributed, while another task was the setting-up of an information board. And, since it was a matter of policy that the troops should be helped to amuse themselves, the Army Educational Corps representatives were kept busy finding and organising the talent within the camp for activities like community singing, brains trusts and concert parties. In this first phase, it was realised that both static and transit troops were working too hard for any 'regular' education to be done, although a few transit units continued to arrange A.B.C.A. discussions, while some energetic and resourceful instructors still managed to do some educational work.

How far the terms of reference had been met during those days before the invasion has been well put by Major Leese :

One evening I took two U.S. officers down to run a discussion in "Camp FX" on "America", during the period the camps were sealed, when each camp had a carefully organised programme of entertainment, in which talks, news reviews and discussions figured prominently. A tote race was arousing great interest when we arrived, a wooden horse called "Stalag FX" winning. As soon as it was over, we stepped into the "racecourse", and for over two hours a crowd of 200 tough assault troops — veteran

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soldiers who are supposed by some to be too cynical to be interested in education — peppered the U.S. officers with questions about every aspect of American life, sometimes calling their driver to give the point of view of the enlisted man. Meanwhile, hundreds of other soldiers were singing lustily in the canteen, led by a piano-accordion, mostly tunes picked up from the Germans in Africa and Italy. Near by, the theatre was packed for the second house of *Stars in Battle-Dress*. Rarely can the A.E.C. have felt that their work was so appreciated, or so directly related to the war effort.¹

During this preparatory phase, while the fighting troops were getting ready for the greatest assault from the sea that the world had known, the Army Educational Corps was preparing for its duties on active service. When the standing orders of Twenty-First Army Group were published in the winter of 1943, it was stated that "The first duty of members of the A.E.C. is to see that general information circulates at all times". "After careful deliberation", stated one of the Army Educational Corps officers concerned, "it was decided that this direction could best be implemented by the production in the field of daily news-sheets."²

Some experience in the production of news-sheets in the field had already been obtained. One Scottish division, which belonged to Twenty-First Army Group, had, for example, produced a field news-sheet in January 1944, while engaged on an exercise in the North of England. In North Africa, the Eighth Army had produced its own news-sheet in the field during 1941. At first this was duplicated, but was later printed on captured presses. This news-sheet, called the *Eighth Army News*, had been of inestimable value in the desert where, perhaps more than in any other theatre of war except the jungle, men felt completely cut off from the outside world. Using the B.B.C. for world news, and Intelligence sources for local battle news, the *Eighth Army News* did much to disseminate up-to-date information, to kill rumour, and, altogether, to keep the Desert Army in good

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heart and morale. But the father of army newspapers was *Tobruk Truth*, which was "produced by two Australian sergeants when Tobruk was isolated and besieged by the Axis forces in 1941"³ Other newspapers had been produced by British troops in Iceland, in Paiforce (the troops of the Middle East manning the supply lines to Russia), and, for men of the Fourteenth Army, the admirable newspaper *S.E.A.C.* was printed daily in Calcutta, and delivered to troops of the South-East Asia Command by every conceivable form of transport. At the beginning of 1945, there were twenty-three major army newspapers serving British soldiers overseas, apart from the hundreds of unit and divisional news-sheets.

To return to the preparations that were being made by the educational personnel with Twenty-First Army Group. Before D Day, the weeks were spent in securing the necessary transport, equipment and stores, and in rehearsing the production of news-sheets under active service conditions. Seventeen days before D Day, these rehearsals culminated in *Exercise Broadsheet*, when all the divisional education officers converged on Corps Headquarters, producing their news-sheets *en route*. About a fortnight before D Day, formations moved into their marshalling areas and were concentrated in sealed camps.

Many friendly claims were made by Army Educational Corps officers as to who produced the first news-sheet after D Day. It was known that one had been produced on June 8, while several others were produced for the first time on the next day. Within a short time each formation was producing its own news-sheet, and, despite innumerable trials and difficulties, continued to do so while it remained on active service. The anticipated value of the news-sheet had not been over-emphasised. It was found, for example, that one unit had been completely without news for three weeks except what it had found in the divisional newspaper. In many ways, too, the news was made available to the

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civilian population, and did much to dissipate the flood of rumours that prevailed among peoples whose emotions had been so disturbed by newly gained liberation.

While the news-sheets varied in format in each division and corps, they all presented a summary of news from the different theatres of war, as well as news from home. What differences there were lay in the general lay-out, the inclusion — or not — of editorial articles, illustrations, items of local interest, and announcements. An excellent feature of the news-sheets was that they all carried maps and diagrams to illustrate the progress of the war. If editorials were included, the writers had to pay particular attention to the state of mind of troops at the time. Thus it was found that troops in slit-trenches receiving their news-sheets during periods of enemy mortaring and shelling were not particularly appreciative of humorous items *. Again, since British troops are at all times suspicious of any kind of propaganda, the editors of the news-sheets had to be constantly on the alert to see that they were not becoming agents for official propaganda.

No standard rules could be laid down for the production of news-sheets, but they were usually done in one of two ways. The first method, which was particularly suitable in rear areas, where, in good weather, a supply of English newspapers often arrived in the afternoon, was to work 'Fleet Street' hours, going to press after midnight, and issuing the news-sheet in the early morning. This meant that many of their 'customers' were able to keep up their habit of the morning paper. In forward areas, however, the best time for production seemed to be in the morning, ensuring that the news-sheets reached the troops before the end of the day.

* The effect of good news on the troops was seen after the glorious epic of Arnhem, when some British air-borne soldiers made their bitter way back to Nijmegen in a very distressed condition. They were said to have been much cheered when their divisional news-sheet informed them of the new increases in pay and of the publication of the Government's scheme for release after the Armistice.

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Experience had shown that, even in the best flying weather, the English newspapers did not reach forward troops until the next day. The distribution of the different news-sheets also varied considerably. The best method was for each unit to collect its own set, while, next to that, the use of the despatch-rider service was the most successful. In some formations the use of the Army Post Office was satisfactory, but Royal Army Service Corps supply trucks proved unsuitable because of the irregularity of delivery. The news-sheets were used in many ways. In some units they were exhibited on notice-boards; in others officers toured sub-units and read out the contents. With forward troops, who were frequently in small isolated detachments, the news-sheets were passed on from hand to hand. A few units used the formation's news-sheets as the basis of a unit production.

But the provision of news was not the only duty undertaken by members of the Army Educational Corps with the British Liberation Army. After the initial assault against Hitler's ' Fortress Europe ', and when the number of troops in France began to increase rapidly, it was found that some units in base areas were able to introduce educational activities on much the same scale that had been possible in Britain. Units where Army Educational Corps instructors did particularly valuable work were hospitals and convalescent depots. Apart from giving their help in any way which made things easier for the wounded, the Army Educational Corps used all their skill at improvisation to develop educational activities. Within a short time at one convalescent depot, for example, one educational serjeant had evolved a scheme similar to that in operation at the convalescent depots at home. Each convalescent soldier was present at three or four lectures weekly; took part in discussion groups and listened to ' brains trusts '; was able to borrow from the well-stocked library of 2500 books — there was a daily distribution of 200-300 books; could keep up his interest in handicrafts like woodwork, ' Perspex ' work and, especially

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for bed patients, embroidery ; French classes were conducted during the evenings for all who cared to attend ; a news-room was open at all hours. The way in which the ' Perspex ' tools and other materials were obtained have not altogether been revealed — one Army Educational Corps instructor ' won ' 12 cwt. of ' Perspex ' from a German aircraft factory.

One of the most distressing problems in hospitals was the treatment of ' bomb-happies ' or battle-exhausted patients. These were men who, after severe fighting, became nervously exhausted and often broke down completely, both physically and mentally. For the more severe cases, the Army Educational Corps could do nothing, but, for some of those not so seriously affected, was able to make a substantial contribution to their recovery. At the request of the medical men, and especially the psychiatrists, the Army Educational Corps instructors helped to organise games and provide educational facilities of various kinds. In one hospital an Army Educational Corps officer played an even more direct part in the treatment of battle-exhausted men. The psychiatrist had found that, when attempting to diagnose and prescribe treatment for the patients, he was either greeted with a torrent of words which it was difficult to check, or a sullen silence. As an experiment he invited an Army Educational Corps officer to organise these men into groups and run discussions with them. This was arranged and the men were invited to talk about any subject they chose. The first question put to the Army Educational Corps officer was usually " Why aren't you fighting ? " When that had been thrashed out to everyone's satisfaction, the officer then listened to all the complaints and grievances which poured from the men. According to the psychiatrist and the Army Educational Corps officer, by the end of the third day the casualties were in a more reasonable condition to talk to the psychiatrist and to tell him of their real worries. In the subsequent course of occupational therapy that was prescribed, the Army Educational Corps instructor often took part.

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In military detention barracks, too, some useful educational work was done. One Army Educational Corps serjeant was given the duty of helping to construct the detention barracks by setting up the barbed wire and erecting the tents. When the soldiers under sentence had moved in, he was, at first, given one-third of a marquee in which to take his classes. Unfortunately, he was flanked on one side by the unit cobbler and on the other by the workshop of the unit 'Pioneers'. This unhappy trilogy could not remain together long, and within a few days the cobbler and the carpenter had found new homes. As the soldiers under sentence came into camp, they were each tested for literacy. Soon classes were in progress for illiterates as well as for backward men. For the other men activities were arranged similar to those in progress at military detention barracks at home.

For other troops in the base areas and on the lines of communications, unit educational activities were encouraged wherever possible. As soon as the units had become semi-static, there was a big demand for classes in French. This could only be met by employing French civilian instructors. It was unfortunate that the terms offered for the payment of foreign workers — 20 francs an hour — was too low to attract many teachers; the position improved considerably when it was 'arranged' that the language teachers should be paid 60 francs an hour, ostensibly 20 francs for the actual instruction, 20 for preparation and 20 for marking exercises. When the first flush of enthusiasm for learning a new language had died down — usually when the British 'Tommy' found that he could get along quite well with his own peculiar French — some good teaching was done and many soldiers acquired a reasonable degree of fluency. They were helped considerably by the supply of phrase-books which were printed in devious ways. With static units in Belgium and Holland there was great interest in learning the German language, and this was catered for so far as possible, by making use of the Army's own text-book, *German from*

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Scratch.* When Allied troops first entered Germany, however, and some of them had been charged with 'fraternising' with German civilians, *German from Scratch* was withdrawn from use with the British Liberation Army, apparently because it had painted the German individual as a more benign being than his record had revealed. In some towns, of which Brussels was one and Bruges another, those who wished to learn another language received a great deal of help from a scheme organised to give the students introductions to civilian homes, where they received not only friendship but also the opportunity of making conversation in the language they were studying.

As we have seen, in some units in the base areas and on lines of communications, educational work proceeded along much the same lines as had been laid down before the units left Britain. In some cases it was possible to allot three hours a week to education during working hours, as well as British Way and Purpose and A.B.C A. So early as November 1944, one unit of the Royal Engineers had several voluntary classes in progress, covering various aspects of vocational training. With fighting troops in forward areas, however, little in the way of organised educational activities could be attempted. News-sheets were avidly received by the men at the front, to whom they were more valuable than to troops in the rear. Discussion groups flourished in all sorts of strange places. One Army Educational Corps officer, for example, described a memorable occasion when he had conducted a discussion under somewhat peculiar conditions. He had been invited to a Royal Army Service Corps unit,

* In 1941, an Inter-Services Committee for Modern Languages had been set up under the chairmanship of the Director of Army Education. This Committee, after a survey of the existing facilities and text-books, decided to prepare a series of simple books and to arrange for the production of sets of gramophone records, spoken by native speakers, in each language for which a text-book was being prepared. The first two to be issued were *French from Scratch* and *German from Scratch*. In view of the demand for these, the series was later extended to include Spanish, Russian, Arabic and Italian.

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but, on arrival, found the unit busy on a 'rush job' which had to be finished before work could stop. The work finished in pouring rain just as daylight was fading. As no artificial light was available, the officer suggested that the discussion might be held on another day. He was entreated to stay and, in total darkness, for two hours led a discussion which remained animated despite the noise of wind and rain against the marquee. Another officer, on returning from a visit to the Front, described his astonishment when, taking shelter in a barn from German mortaring, he found a corporal and twelve men earnestly discussing "What shall we do with the Germans after the war?" Apart from the provision of news-sheets and material for discussion groups, however, it was almost impossible to organise other educational activities for troops in the front line. The work done by Army Educational Corps representatives as information officers in forward areas was described in the official report as follows.

A E C had lived in slit trenches under battle conditions and had acquitted themselves well. With the tail-board of a lorry as an office, they had worked all night and had produced their daily news-sheets for delivery with the rations in the morning.

The difficulties encountered by the men organising the educational scheme were similar to those that they had met at home, but, with the British Liberation Army, they stood out in greater relief. Thus, there were not nearly enough Army Educational Corps personnel to meet the incessant demands on their services — at one period in 1944, some 250,000 troops were being served by one captain, two lieutenants and seven serjeant-instructors — there was little equipment, apparatus or raw materials, and there were insufficient regimental instructors. The supply of books was also meagre, and here the position would have been intolerable without the magnificent contribution made by the British Red Cross Society to hospitals and convalescent homes, as well as other units. Another major difficulty was

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the continual movement of troops. One divisional education officer, for example, in describing his experiences during the latter half of 1944, stated that if his unit remained in one spot for six days, they considered themselves a static unit. Another discouraging feature of the educational work occurred when Army Educational Corps representatives had built up sound schemes and, for some reason, had to cancel them at short notice. When British troops entered Antwerp, an Army Educational Corps officer was one of the first to enter the city. He took possession of a well-equipped German training school and, in eight weeks, succeeded in converting it into an educational centre of no mean repute. The centre was opened at first with five subjects on the timetable. At the end of fourteen days it was hit by a German rocket-bomb, and the officer began to look for another centre. At Bruges a Study Centre was opened in February 1945, to provide for the Reinforcement Holding Unit and Leave Centre in the city. Although it was impossible here to run classes of such a continuous nature as was being done in Study Centres at home, the language classes probably achieved even more because there was a much greater incentive to study. The facilities provided by this and other centres were at least as good as those provided in centres at home. Despite all the difficulties, some excellent work had been done, and those who were privileged to hear first-hand accounts of their experiences from members of the Army Educational Corps who had been with Twenty-First Army Group since D Day, were inspired by their magnificent devotion to duty and their unremitting service to adult education.

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Chapter Seventeen

Prisoners of War

ANY record of the educational work undertaken in the Army during the Second World War would be incomplete without an account of the work carried out by prisoners of war. In July 1944 there were more than fifty prisoner of war camps in Germany, France, Denmark, Poland and other countries. Each of them possessed certain common characteristics for the prisoner — lack of space, of heat and of light, constant interruptions, no silence and no privacy. In this “melancholy state”, as Mr. Winston Churchill described it,¹ the hours “crawl like paralytic centipedes for most of the prisoners”. Under these conditions the pursuit of education was not an easy matter. Yet, as one wit put it, education is sometimes by “boredom out of confinement”, and in many camps this delivery was successfully made. Where a few were gathered together, the spirit of enquiry asserted itself, and, from the beginning of 1940, educational activities began.

A large proportion of the prisoners were young men who were dismayed by the prospect of falling years behind in qualifying for their trade or profession through being cut off from study. Other men wished to seize opportunities, which they had never had before, of working for a degree, while others wanted to acquire knowledge for its own sake. The work started from scratch. At first there were no classrooms, books or writing materials, and often no chairs or tables. In some camps there were men who had formerly been teachers or lecturers, while in others there was no one who had had any direct contact with the teaching profession. But vision and courage were not lacking and, in most camps,

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essential equipment was improvised, classrooms were built, and, where teachers were missing, the men took it in turn to lecture to one another. Fortunately, the needs of prisoners of war had been foreseen by those voluntary organisations whose work on behalf of the wounded and prisoners is well known.

From the beginning, it was appreciated that although some camps would probably contain professional teachers, education could only be carried on satisfactorily with help from home. Books, for example, were seen to be a prime necessity and would have to be sent from outside sources. Early in 1940, a branch of the Red Cross and St. John Prisoner of War Department was started under the name of the Educational Books Section. This section was initially manned by a staff of two; they were given one room in which to perform their duties. As the number of prisoners grew, the Educational Books Section came to need more and more accommodation and eventually a part of the New Bodleian at Oxford was placed at its disposal. The director was the Master of Balliol (Dr. A. D. (now Lord) Lindsay), who was supported by many of our foremost educationists, both academic and vocational, and who gave their services to ensure that each prisoner obtained what he really needed.

To make the scheme successful, the Education Books Section realised that each 'pupil' would have to be treated individually, and an arrangement for keeping personal records was set up. Often the original request from a prisoner was vague — one woman wrote in to the Red Cross saying: "My son asks for books on knowledge. He doesn't ask for any particular one" — and it was difficult to satisfy his needs. In order to help prospective students, the Red Cross sent to the 'man of confidence' at every camp forms on which each prisoner could fill in his personal particulars; the subject he wished to study and his proficiency in it; which examination, if any, he wished to take; and, if he wanted to choose the titles for himself, the list of books he required.

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The information supplied by the candidate was then submitted to one of the advisers to the Red Cross, which, after advice, met the demand as far as was possible. Nor was the supply of books the only problem that the Red Cross officials had to face. There were many difficulties about the supply of equipment and materials, but most of these were overcome by Allied or international co-operation, and, not less important, by the helpful attitude of many German prison camp officials. It was possible to supply stationery, chiefly through gifts of paper received from Canada and Sweden. Skeletons and pickled dogfish were sent out for biologists, and equipment like rulers, blackboards, chalk and so on, was provided by the British Red Cross or the International Red Cross and Young Men's Christian Association at Geneva.

A description of the way in which the prisoners helped themselves was given by a warrant officer of the Army Educational Corps, who had been taken prisoner during the early part of the War.

On the 25th September [wrote Warrant Officer Wright], a meeting of those interested in educational matters was held. From this meeting, which realised the necessity, foresaw the limitations and difficulties, and was responsible for the inception of a "school", has arisen a large establishment catering for the educational needs of nearly 5000 men. The difficulties have been legion, and credit is due to the untiring work of the instructors that so much has been accomplished. From the "Bad Old Days" of two classes in one room, with no material or textbooks, in the depth of winter with inadequate heating, we have progressed to a large building, partitioned (by Red Cross boxwood) into seven rooms — still fireless, alas! Here disturbances are fewer, though improvements and renovation are still proceeding.

The twenty-three original subjects are still on the programme, but now there are no fewer than eighty-four subjects taught! This may appear to be the height of folly — ridiculously over-ambitious. . . . But one has only to consider the many diverse occupations of the men congregated inside these strands of wire — men from all walks of life; men from every trade and profession

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known in Britain or the Dominions. Consider these, and remember that, as far as is humanly possible, every individual must be catered for—and the number of classes becomes explicable. Notice also the variegated examinations that have been applied for, and one will realise that the need is very real.²

By November 1942, books and study courses had been supplied to more than eighteen thousand applicants, covering a wide range of subjects from science and art to technology and commerce; requests for books on engineering and languages were by far the most numerous. Eighteen months later it was stated by Lord Camrose at a Prisoner of War Exhibition in London that more than thirty-two thousand prisoners had written to say that they wished to educate themselves for their future after the War. In reply the Red Cross and St. John Committee had sent to the camps some twenty-two thousand educational books. Since men felt that their progress could only be shown by passing examinations, special arrangements were made with many examining authorities to permit prisoners to take their examinations in the camps. As a result, more than a hundred examining bodies in Great Britain, including twelve universities, as well as, later, various examining bodies in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, agreed to send examination papers in subjects ranging from law to bee-keeping. The first despatch of examination papers was in May 1942. The examining bodies concerned were the Institutions of Chartered Shipbrokers, Electrical Engineers, Structural Engineers, Transport, and Scottish Bankers; the Royal Horticultural Society, and the Association of Rating and Valuation Officers.

By the end of December 1944, some 14,272 candidates in fifty-five camps had applied for examinations, and 6333 had already taken them. Of these 5707 results had been published, 4496 of the candidates passing outright. More than one examining body commented on the good work submitted by the prisoners and emphasised that there had been no

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lowering of standards in the marking of the scripts. Thus, the Institute of Banking in Scotland wrote that "the work sent in compares quite favourably with that of more fortunate members of the bank's staff who have no such difficulties to contend with", and the Institute of Transport reported that "the standard of marking has been the normal one, and I am sure that you will be glad to know that your performances were achieved without any concession on account of your circumstances". Many of the prisoner candidates won distinctions and honours in open competition with candidates from Britain. One Australian, for example, Private C. E. Allison, took in camp the examinations of the Institute of Book-keepers. In the fellowship examination he obtained first place, with distinction, and was awarded the Institute's prize.

Typical of results [wrote one correspondent] are the successes obtained in the technical examinations of the City and Guilds: in Stalag XXA, among other Firsts, one candidate gained a First in both the motor-vehicle electrician's and the heating and ventilating engineering courses. Thirteen candidates sat in Oflag VIB for the intermediate examination of the Chartered Institute of Secretaries, of whom 11 passed, one gaining a French prize. In Stalag XXA all three candidates passed, one being awarded the George Strachan prize, and in Stalag Luft III two men were awarded first class in typography.³

Many University of London candidates had sat for intermediate and final degree examinations in theology, arts, law, music, medicine, science, engineering and economics.

When one recalls some of the difficulties which these men faced, the results seem almost incredible. Sometimes, the German issue of soap was used instead of chalk, and toilet paper was used to make exercise paper. In the winter the weather was often bitterly cold and, as fuel stocks were limited, candidates for examinations were forced to write their papers muffled up to the eyes while some even wore gloves. Then there was the difficulty of concentrating with

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thoughts of liberation gnawing inside their heads And yet education went on.

Owing to their various rules about residence and matriculation, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge stood slightly outside the examinations scheme.

In the case of Oxford a special examination in English language and Literature was set, being the first examination ever conducted by the University outside Oxford In marking it the examiners had in view "the standard of knowledge and literary accomplishment which the Final Honours School demands", and two prisoners obtained a first-class It is interesting that one of the examiners expressed his opinion that the lack of "bulky works of criticism, literary history and critical apparatus" would "force students to concentrate on texts and to digest them more thoroughly, and, above all, to find in one great author their chief commentary on another" and that this had "certain positive advantages over the normal procedure".⁴

- Generally speaking, the examinations were conducted by means of printed papers only. Where oral or practical tests were normally included, the prisoners, as a rule, were allowed to postpone those parts of the examination until they returned to Great Britain. In some cases, however, a fellow prisoner was accepted by the examining body concerned as qualified and competent to undertake the appropriate work on the spot; usually this arrangement was only made in the case of oral tests as, for example, in foreign languages. Owing to the lack of the special apparatus and chemicals concerned, practical examinations in subjects like physics and chemistry were not possible.

The work in one of the largest Stalags gives a striking illustration of the tremendous educational ferment that went on inside these prison camps During 1943, in this particular camp, some 104,991 students from all parts of the Empire attended the ninety different classes, where seventy-two qualified tutors taught many subjects, ranging from elementary agriculture to advanced engineering. A special class was

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held " for the illiterate, many of whom had had no chance to study as they lived as sheep farmers or boundary riders far from a school ". The camp library of between five and six thousand books was so well run that only three books were lost in two years. Working parties, too, were catered for by six visiting tutors, the German authorities allowing the students to return to the base camp five or six weeks before examinations for intensive reading. There were numerous difficulties with working parties, however, although one man, after working ten hours in a gravel pit, returned to his hut each evening and put in several hours reading in preparation for the intermediate B.Sc. examination.

Another instance of what education meant to these prisoners came from an Oflag (officers' prisoner of war camp). Since 1940 it had organised its own university with seventeen faculties, the language faculty taught twenty-one languages and the educational library contained thirty thousand volumes. In some camps, even the wounded made the necessary effort of concentration to take an examination. One young teacher, for example, who had himself been wounded, worked sixteen hours a day to prepare some of his wounded colleagues for matriculation. A noteworthy illustration of the way the prisoners made the most of their opportunities was provided by one young zoologist who made some original observations on the behaviour of the cricket, and, after he had been repatriated, broadcast his account of it from London. Another prisoner of war, who acted as education officer at an Oflag in Germany from October 1943 to March 1945, wrote on his return that " quite a few officers attained proficiency in as many as six languages during their captivity ".⁵ Further evidence of the way in which prisoners spent their enforced leisure came from a medical officer who was himself a prisoner.⁶ From a survey conducted with three hundred officers from all parts of the Empire, he estimated that 29 per cent of them were following definite courses of study and, on an average, were working 3 hours 46 minutes

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a day. Most of the prisoners studied some language — usually German — at some stage or other during their captivity ; besides those who were studying for examination purposes, 51 per cent of the officers spent an average of 1 hour 47 minutes a day on general study. This suggested that, even in captivity, study must have a purpose ; the simple pursuit of knowledge was not enough. Of the actual pursuits, 47 per cent were engaged in hand work of some description, but the total time taken on this was relatively small ; 11 per cent devoted their time to drawing, sketching and painting ; a small number were occupied with the performance of music of various kinds, and nearly half the group gave up two evenings a week to listen to music. There were very few writers in the camp, although 3 per cent kept diaries. Only 3 per cent claimed to be connected in any way with the stage, and it is an interesting comment that the most spectacular features of camp life, namely, the arts and crafts exhibitions and the theatre shows, were, basically, the work of very few and did not in any way represent the industry and talent of the camp as a whole. Every officer read to a greater or lesser extent ; the only negative returns in this category came from men who spent several hours a day in study. From these observations, the interesting conclusion, put forward tentatively by Captain Dearlove, was that the time spent on creative and recreational activities could not have been much increased even with unlimited facilities.

Before this account of education in prisoner of war camps is concluded, one thing more needs to be said. Emphasis has been placed on what was achieved by the prisoners under desperately discouraging circumstances. To balance the account, it must be stated that there were difficulties, both personal and environmental, which had to be faced and which were not always overcome. There was always the uncertainty of mail, the dearth of equipment and the poverty of accommodation. Sometimes the shortage or bad quality

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of food made it almost impossible to continue classes. Moreover, as Lieutenant P. M. Burns put it,

the monotonous routine of daily life was in many ways a help to study ; but the lack of stimulus provided in normal times by the encouragement of one's kin, change of scene and definite objectives all told on concentration. Nor did the barbed wire help concentration at times, and though, on the whole, affairs ran smoothly, it sometimes proved difficult to persuade other interests to look upon education as something conterminous with life and experience ! .

The same officer has told us how every prisoner tended to vacillate between boundless optimism and deep depression. News, favourable, adverse or none, was an unsettling factor. The worst enemy of all was apathy which was unmistakably summarized in one of the Army's most telling catch-phrases, "I've had it". Even the best of classes showed a deep decline in attendance towards its close. A further difficulty was an intensely personal one. Those who were actively engaged in administration were often torn between their own studies and the educational needs of the camp. It was only to be expected that the educational temperature would vary with the rise and fall in spirits of the prisoners. What was surprising was not that sometimes little was being done but that which was done at all was done so well. When one activity was exhausted, another was tried ; when the spoken word seemed to lack appeal, "potted exhibitions" were improvised which often taxed the wit and ingenuity of the whole camp. The spirit of these prisoners was often sad but it was seldom broken.

The strength of that spirit may best be indicated by quoting from two letters written by education officers in the camps. One of them wrote :

We try to communicate the faith that there are things of the mind unbounded by time and space, and that captives may escape beyond the barbed wire into fields of knowledge and delight. Those who know this freedom of the intellect are the

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happiest people in this camp and they will go out from here the best citizens when the gates are open.

The fact that many of the men were preparing to play their part in the post-war world was trenchantly indicated by the other education officer when he wrote :

I want . . . to publicise the fact that this period is not one of inactivity, it is not a lull or a hiatus, but an extra period of learning, of training, which the men have taken, or shall I say, have had thrust upon them by force of circumstances.

In closing his letter, this correspondent paid tribute to the work of the Red Cross Educational Books Section ; it was a tribute which would have received the warmest support from all those of his fellow prisoners who had, by their exertions, turned adversity into opportunity.

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Chapter Eighteen

Criticisms and Comments

FROM the foregoing accounts, it might appear that army education flowed steadily on its way without many serious checks or cross-currents. This was far from the case. From time to time bitter criticism from various sides was directed both against the scheme as a whole and against particular parts of it. Indeed, it is doubtful whether the scheme could truly be described as educational if it had not met obstacles which temporarily checked the flow and eventually diverted it along different channels. In this chapter we will consider some of the misgivings which army education caused in the minds of some individuals who, let it be emphasised, had had extensive experience of adult education in some form or other.

The main criticism was directed against the scheme as a whole. Many people felt that the existence of educational activities within the framework of army organisation was incompatible with reality. This was first publicly stated by a former Workers' Educational Association tutor who had become a member of the Army.¹ His argument, put simply, was that education implied enlightenment, understanding, a critical and independent attitude, and at its best, a heightened social consciousness; the Army, on the other hand, stood for discipline, in which there could be no independent thought but only obedience, and an unquestioning attitude towards authority.

In the worst type of Army [Mr. James exclaimed] and this regrettably includes our own so far as organisation on outworn traditions are concerned, the kind of attitude encouraged may be

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summed up in the phrase " theirs not to reason why ". . . The *raison d'être* of the Army, of course, is to kill and destroy. It is obvious that liberty and freedom are non-existent inside its ranks, and a critical attitude only too often leads a man to the inside of a detention barracks, an institution which ought not to be tolerated by a progressive community.

Many of Mr. James' other remarks were complaints of the inefficiency and incompetency of those in authority over the Army. It suggested that he himself had had an unfortunate army experience and was not taking too kindly to discipline. But his main theme was that the signposts of Education and the Army were pointing in two different directions. In this he was supported by others who had had experience of army education either as civilians or soldiers or both.

Mr. S. G. Raybould, for example, a staff tutor at the University of Leeds, who had been intimately connected with the work since it began in 1940, wrote in November 1942 ² that he, too, was doubtful whether army organisation was compatible with genuine education. His scepticism was due to the power wielded by commanding officers. In a unit, the commanding officer's word was law, he was responsible for morale as well as for skill at arms. Since morale was influenced by education, then it was the commanding officer's duty to watch the education of his men, and, if necessary, to amend it — regardless of his competence by educational standards to do so. In many cases, it was known that commanding officers had banned lecturers and lectures, and no one could effectively interfere with their decisions. Protests could, of course, be made, and the matter referred by the unit education officer to the nearest Army Educational Corps officer. Even then, Mr. Raybould stated, " the obdurate Commanding Officer can often find pretexts for disregarding suggestions and even instructions on which he does not wish to act ". Under this autocratic system, Raybould insisted, no real educational activity was possible.

The point of view that ' Army ' and ' Education ' were

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words that could never run along the same lines had been put forward in even more downright terms by the general secretary of the Workers' Educational Association soon after the Haining Committee had reported in 1940. Mr. Green's theme was that this Committee had completely failed to realise that education in the Army had any bearing on the civic responsibility of the soldier after he had been demobilised. "No A.E.C.", Green stated, "can interpret the spiritual and moral values of Adult Education. It can provide technical and instructional classes. It can subsidise lectures and this is all to the good. Something more is needed."³ What that something more was, we shall consider in later pages.

This basic point of whether the 'Army' and 'Education' were indeed pointing in opposite directions was re-stated and discussed by one writer in December 1943.⁴ On one hand, he said, there were critics insistent that the job of the Army was to win the War, and that education had no contribution to make to that job which was substantial enough even to merit tolerance for itself. "On the other hand", the correspondent declared, "are critics equally insistent that, since education flourishes only in freedom, thought and speech, then it cannot survive in the highly disciplined, authoritarian organisation of the Army — and that education is a misnomer for anything that does survive." On the whole, these criticisms added up to the sweeping pessimism that army education was of little use to the Army and of little relevance to education. Before attempting to analyse this paradox, it is first necessary to ask what special conditions army organisation imposes upon educational work. And, if one accepted the White Paper definition of the purpose of education as being "to provide means for all of developing the various talents with which they are endowed, and so enriching the inheritance of the country whose citizens they are",⁵ it is useful to enquire whether this purpose must inevitably be narrowed when applied to army education? The answer to

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these questions has been given already in the story outlined in previous chapters. From the beginning, the much-criticised 'higher authorities' had insisted that the serving man should be considered, first, as a soldier; secondly, as a citizen; thirdly, as an individual, and, fourthly, as a breadwinner (It was also recognised that this was an attempt to divide the indivisible, but that it had practical utility) In 1940 it had been laid down that education should be on a voluntary basis and that it should be "related to a genuine demand from the men". Thus began the system of education in the free time of the soldier and auxiliary which, throughout the War, formed the bulk of army education.

Later, for many reasons, which have already been discussed (see p. 119), a compulsory system of education was introduced which, despite its detractors,⁶ must be measured in terms of its effects on voluntary pursuits. Here the evidence was unanswerable. The introduction of British Way and Purpose and A.B.C.A. led to a marked and significant increase in educational activities during the soldier's free time.* A.B.C.A. and British Way and Purpose were genuine attempts to make the soldier aware not only of his rights but also of his responsibilities as a citizen. No one connected with these schemes was ever in doubt about the real need for them or about the success they achieved. As for the education of the soldier as a breadwinner, for those interested there was the huge correspondence course organisation in which men could, at a nominal fee, enrol for vocational or postal study courses in order to prepare for technical, commercial or professional examinations. Further, soldiers and auxiliaries were constantly being exhorted to take

* "No statistical information regarding the work of A.B.C.A. has been compiled, and even if it had, it would be of little real value. The indirect value of the work cannot be statistically assessed; but there are clear signs that it has been very great, the more obvious indications being an increased interest in voluntary activities and a growing demand for the facilities of Information Rooms" (Quoted from Broadsheet 234, *Education in the Services*, Political and Economic Planning, May 18, 1945, p. 15).

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advantage of the facilities — usually free of charge — that were offered so generously by technical institutions of all kinds.

Army education had deliberately and consistently sought to provide the means for all of developing their various talents as individuals, as citizens and as breadwinners. Moreover, there was an awareness that education in any one of the three latter spheres must necessarily add to the fighting efficiency of the soldier. That was achieved by a recognition of all the elements in the unity of the individual, not an unbalanced emphasis on any one of those elements. In deciding, therefore, whether the Army and Education belonged to two different worlds, one would have to consider the interests aroused and the results obtained. There can be little doubt that, despite all the difficulties and set-backs, and the ephemeral nature of much of the scheme, a great deal had been done to break new ground where, providing the husbandry were efficient, rich harvests in adult education would be reaped after the War.

What of the particular criticism that the commanding officer wielded too much power over education in his unit and that many commanding officers took advantage of this power to nullify all educational activities? That the latter point was true, no one connected with the scheme would deny. One lecturer, for example, was able to make observations which emphasised the profound effect that the interest, or lack of it, of a commanding officer can have in education in his unit. In one group of camps abroad, not only all the commanding officers but also the brigadier in charge were very enthusiastic. They received the lecturer with almost embarrassing keenness and the result was a six-days visit packed with varying forms of educational activities — lectures, discussions and brains trusts — attended by thousands of men, a visit which ended with all-round sincere requests to the lecturer to divert his return so as to be able to pay another visit. At the next centre visited, the brigadier

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expressed no desire to meet the lecturer (unless the latter wished it—which he did) and no commanding officer appeared for the visit of four days. The lecturer was not surprised, therefore, to find little enthusiasm among the men—an empty information room, an empty army educational centre and a first lecture attended by four men, while thousands were ‘kicking their heels’ outside (see also p. 267). But whether these commanding officers were as numerous as certain critics suggested was open to question. One Workers’ Educational Association tutor, for example, wrote, “Most of the Commanding Officers with whom I have come in contact have been very sympathetic and have given me every assistance. I do not think I have been exceptionally fortunate, as most of my colleagues tell a similar story.”⁸ Where commanding officers were obstructive, they were usually older men and were not so much opposed to army education as afraid of any extension of a subject that they knew little about. That their numbers were much too great in the earlier days of the educational scheme was only too apparent; that their numbers rapidly decreased as the Army expanded and younger men were appointed to the command of units was equally obvious. In order to combat this apathy and to win the support of commanding officers, courses dealing with the philosophy of education and its value to the Army were arranged at Coleg Harlech and other centres. These courses were generally successful, but the total number of commanding officers attending was relatively low. Six months after the end of the War it was still possible to write that some senior officers—even deputy-directors at the War Office—possessed only hazy ideas of what army education meant and what it was trying to do.

Whether commanding officers wielded too much power over army education was a constant bone of contention among many who were assisting the scheme in some way or other. This was particularly true with those who, despite close contact with military organisation, never grasped its

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essentials. The commanding officer was primarily responsible for the military efficiency of his unit. The orders and instructions which he received from higher sources were all intended to promote that efficiency. But, in the unit, since he was ultimately responsible, his word was law and, subject to appeals, his decisions were final. Without that authority, it would have been impossible for the commanding officer to train men as soldiers to play their part as a disciplined, fighting army. If, therefore, he had been informed that in educational matters his authority was subordinate to that, say, of a visiting Army Educational Corps officer (as some educationists suggested), the whole basis of discipline in the Army would, by precedent, have been undermined.⁷ Unfortunately, many of the critics never seemed to realise that the highest authorities and the majority of commanding officers were fully aware that the best discipline came from intelligent and enlightened soldiers who gave unquestioning support to their superior officers because they knew why they — the officers and men — were fighting. Anything that contributed to the mental efficiency of the troops under his command was usually welcome by the commanding officer, and army education was no exception. That senior officers were not all 'Colonel Blimps' was illustrated by General Beckett, who, when opening a fortnight's course on the British Way and Purpose, stated that, for his part, he considered education to be of equal importance to operational efficiency and physical fitness for the modern soldier.⁸ Similar remarks were continually being made by other senior officers; this was indicated by Dr. Aris, a civilian lecturer with considerable experience of army education. "Most Commanding Officers", he wrote, "are fully alive to the importance of educational activities amongst their men as a very essential part of the care for their welfare."¹⁰

At the same time, although they were in a minority, there were too many commanding officers who completely failed to see that education had anything to offer to the

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military efficiency of their units. By these 'practical, realistic' men, it was described as a frill or superfluity for which busy men like themselves had no time. With these individuals strong action was often needed, and here, according to Raybould and other correspondents,¹¹ some Army Educational Corps officers, and especially the more senior ones, were not as firm or as diligent as they might have been. Even when some of the junior Army Educational Corps officers tried to make recalcitrant commanding officers carry out the minimum educational obligations which were laid upon them by Army Council instructions, they could not always, said these correspondents, rely on the support of their senior officers in the Corps. These senior officers were generally peace-time members of the Army Educational Corps; most of them had been given promotion when the war-time scheme had been announced, on the assumption that they were conversant with what would be needed by the men.

No doubt much of this criticism was amply justified. Between the wars, the regular members of the Army Educational Corps had lived through an episode of discouraging circumstances which had given some of them an ingrained habit of cautiousness and even timidity. These men were described by the assistant secretary of the London Regional Committee as follows:

The A.E.C. exists in two strata - the pre-war and the war-time recruit. Some of the former have been unequal to the sudden growth, both in its administrative complexity and in its wider range of content; in general, however, they have revealed an administrative efficiency and a tolerance for, if not complete sympathy with, the new content. On the other hand, they are invariably wedded to arguments of utility, they know and use "the proper channels" and they seek security in statistical returns.¹²

What made the disparity between some peace-time and war-time members of the Army Educational Corps even more

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pronounced was that, with very few exceptions, the senior positions had been given (by themselves, usually) to those who had 'got in first', namely, the peace-time members. Some of these had had distinguished military records but their only qualification for educational work was that they had had long military service. It would be dishonest to pretend that they were anything but obstructions to the forward march of army education. Relations between them and some of their junior officers, who were often men with considerable experience in education and who had joined the Army Educational Corps because they believed in the value of education to the fighting efficiency of the Army, were nearly always strained and, in their areas, prevented any real progress in what was necessarily bound to be an uphill struggle demanding co-operative effort.

A further difficulty was caused by the fact that, when the Army Education Scheme for the Release Period was introduced (see p 315), a number of promotions to senior positions was given to members of the Army Educational Corps who had been serjeant and warrant officer instructors before the War. As instructors performing routine teaching duties these men might have been real assets to army education. As officers in charge of the administration and organisation of educational facilities for thousands of troops, the majority of them were full of misplaced enthusiasm which did more harm than good. Where they had zeal they had little insight into the philosophy of education and its place in an army at war; where they had educational background the monotonous nature of their duties before the War had destroyed their keenness and initiative. They were able to retain their positions only by the efforts of those officers and instructors in subordinate ranks. What made matters even more difficult for these promoted ex-peace-time warrant officers and serjeants was that, before the War, the gap between them and some Army Educational Corps officers was as wide as the gap between all officers and other ranks.

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When these peace-time Army Educational Corps officers saw men whom they had hitherto commanded appointed to positions equal to their own, they became resentful and embittered, especially if they felt that they had not had the advancement due to them because of their seniority. The regular Army Educational Corps officers were not all like this, however, and some of them did invaluable work in administration and organisation which could not have been performed, particularly during the early stages, by war-time recruits who knew little of the workings of the complex military machine.

Nor were all the junior Army Educational Corps war-time officers possessed of the "vision, purpose, drive and courage" which was ascribed to them.¹³ Some of them, despite good academic qualifications, were out of their depth in a scheme of adult education which demanded initiative, enthusiasm, improvising ability, resolution and tact. Fortunately these were in the minority, and, in general, the Army Educational Corps, both commissioned and non-commissioned officers, peace-time and war-time, became recognised for resource and enterprise in carrying out a task which was never easy. In spite of all the difficulties, and many of them were unavoidable in so great an enterprise, the majority of men in the Army Educational Corps worked with devotion to their duties, and their combined efforts did much to make education a powerful influence for good inside the Army.

One other criticism, which was frequently directed at the war-time education scheme, was the curtailing of opportunities for free discussion on controversial subjects. The criticism arose mainly because of King's Regulations which forbade soldiers from taking an active part in political activities of any kind.¹⁴ These Regulations were interpreted in different ways, many commanding officers assuming that it was their duty to prevent the discussion of any subject which might cause controversy within the unit. This

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belief was retained even after the inauguration of A.B.C.A. At the beginning A.B.C.A. itself had deliberately avoided the publication of bulletins dealing with issues which evoked strong emotional reactions. Within a short time of the introduction of A.B.C.A., however, it was seen that discussion was being carried out in a spirit which admitted that the "other fellow has a point of view" and bulletins on more controversial topics were introduced. Despite this official sanction by the Army Council, which recognised that worth-while discussions on current affairs could not be carried on without controversy, a number of commanding officers still believed that the only way to keep the Army together was by the elimination of topics which had any political or religious connotation — and they acted accordingly. In one unit, for example, a group of recruits formed "an unofficial committee to organise a weekly discussion circle. The Officer Commanding approved, but tabooed religion and politics, and required reports of all debates, with the names and seconders of resolutions."¹⁵ This group never met. Other voluntary groups met for a short time, but, under similar conditions, soon abandoned their discussions. One Army Educational Corps serjeant was severely reprimanded by his commanding officer for stating in a lecture on intelligence tests that the use of such tests in civilian life had shown that there exists a very imperfect correlation between the distribution of ability and the distribution of educational opportunity. This was said to be "sheer Socialism". The incident had repercussions on all the educational work in the unit in question, and on the attitude to his work of the serjeant and all who learned of the incident.

Fortunately the proportion of commanding officers who would not allow free discussion on most subjects was small, and became less as the War progressed. Some organised discussion groups reached a high standard, mainly because no subject for discussion was barred.¹⁶ One man, for example, who had been a tutor in adult education in civilian

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life, wrote of the discussion group in his unit. "To all of us, marooned as we were in a sea of educational indifference, this weekly opportunity to air extremist views on religion, politics and art without restriction came like an hour back in 'Civvy St'."

Most of the criticism, however, was directed against those discussions which took place during the A.B.C.A. and British Way and Purpose sessions (see p. 137). These, of course, were compulsory, and many soldiers and civilians objected, not only because of the lack of free discussion but also because they believed that these meetings consisted of official propaganda put out by some War Office hierarchy in order to preserve the rights and privileges of that mysterious faction called "they". The Beveridge Report incident (see p. 176) was often quoted as a way in which the War Office — and hence the Government — developed their propaganda by suppressing discussion of a topic which had created considerable stir in the Army. The attitude of some civilians was summed up by one writer when he wrote :

Some members of the W.E.A. are still nervous of having too much to do with the development of Army education because they fear that it may be used as an instrument of reactionary propaganda. . . . It is up to the W.E.A. to drop whatever lingering allegedly democratic doubts it still has about the whole scheme and to make more effort than it has done so far in helping it "

One correspondent, who called himself Legobu, in writing of the British Way and Purpose pamphlets which were used as instructor's briefs for talks on citizenship, stated that "What is presented for the troops is a series of harangues on the static system of democracy envisaged by the respectable reactionaries as 'what we are fighting for', the permanent political system of the future",¹⁸ and, later, "To tell soldiers that they are fighting to preserve the days of 1939 is, to say the least of it, a complete waste of time". Against this, other outspoken critics objected to the British Way and Purpose

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bulletins because they were preaching "pure Socialism". On the whole, the criticisms that British Way and Purpose bulletins were too much to the Left or to the Right roughly balanced each other, and it seems that the happy medium of promoting vigorous interest in Britain and British institutions had been developed without departing too much from objectivity. Thus, in replying to Legobu, an Army Educational Corps sergeant stated .

The official summary published by the War office seems to me to be an excellent introduction to the study of civics. It constantly stresses the need for change and the fact that we are fighting for the opportunity of making those changes. It insists that the responsibility must rest upon the individual who should take his share of political activity.¹⁹

This was put in another way by Dr Basil Yeaxlee :

They [the Army council] recognise that a citizen army is not merely the citizenry become soldiery for the time being, but a great body of hardened and disciplined crusaders who will come back from desperately fought battles to build better than before that common life of a peace-loving people in defence of which they have risked all.²⁰

The whole question of how much controversy should be permitted was a difficult one, and the official attitude seemed to be that put forward by the Director of A.B.C.A. :

No one from outside can determine the "dosage" of controversy for any unit. It depends on the experience and good sense of the leader no less than on the knowledge and stability of the men. But the object of an A.B.C.A. discussion is to secure balanced controversy on the topic under consideration.²¹

From the start there was real suspicion about the true purpose of British Way and Purpose, and often the instructor was greeted with "You were told to come and say this, weren't you?" This suspicion was gradually overcome when the men realised that the instructor had come to

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inform and discuss and not indoctrinate. Where the instructor had bias and could not conceal it, he was usually warmly assailed by a member of the group who held opposing political ideas. That soldiers and auxiliaries were not in fear of any 'authority' was revealed by their questions. Frequently the imperialist nature of the War was asserted with considerable vehemence — and was equally vehemently challenged. One tutor reported

that there is no difficulty in getting discussions going nor in getting requests for subjects, mainly concerned with the course of the war, and with the social, economic and political problems to follow the war. . . . Although the men on these sites are expected to be present at the talks and discussions, there is no difficulty, and indeed the tutor's weekly visit is readily and warmly welcomed.²¹

As time went on, less and less 'political' criticism was made of the British Way and Purpose bulletins, and even less was made of the A.B.C.A. pamphlets. The authors of the pamphlets generally practised neutrality, except, as Sir James Grigg said, they

make no attempt to conceal from the British soldier that men of his race have played a great and beneficent part in the history of the world and that they themselves, and their children, have and will have an opportunity of playing as great and as beneficent a part in the future.²²

The bias of which A.B.C.A. and British Way and Purpose were sometimes accused was, as has already been indicated, also directed at some lecturers under the army education scheme. One military lecturer, for example, who made many tours of the country lecturing on "India", was, on more than one occasion, attacked for his inaccurate remarks and misrepresentation. Many troops thought that this particular lecturer did step beyond the limits of objectivity, but often the accusation of political bias that was directed against some lecturers had a little to do with certain coloured beams in the eyes of the critic himself. When a civilian lecturer was

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found guilty of preaching a particular doctrine, his name was removed from the lists of lecturers available to the Forces. On the whole, an impartial presentation was attained, and the number of complaints about 'political' lecturers was very low

Just as some serving men objected to political indoctrination because they feared it represented only one point of view, so other soldiers complained because speakers on 'party politics' were not allowed in units. The answer to this was that it would have created a potentially dangerous situation in that those responsible for nominating speakers could, by selection, be able to foster the political attitude which they themselves desired to promote. The policy of insisting on objectivity from lecturers and discussion group leaders met with overwhelming approval. That a good standard was reached was emphasised by one soldier when he wrote, "I always endeavour to find their [recruits] reactions to the educational lecturers at their preliminary training centres, and most of them have expressed surprise at hearing anything so enlightened in the Army".²³ One civilian with experience of adult education stated that "Most civilians are surprised at the freedom with which soldiers express their opinions".²⁴

Other criticisms levelled at army education concerned the quality of the work that was being done. On many occasions the value of the work was decried because it did not conform to the high standards of the civilian voluntary organisations connected with adult education. To this there could only be one answer. In some cases the work was of a quality not a whit inferior to any that was going in civilian life outside the universities. Here attention might be directed to the innumerable courses that were organised at the universities by the regional committees, the tutors often being professors and lecturers outstanding in the field of adult education; many of these were also responsible for classes taken within the units themselves. Further, one

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might refer to the great number of courses arranged at the army schools of education where the military instructors were not infrequently men who had extensive experience of adult education in civilian life.

Nevertheless, to the charge that the bulk of army education was much below the standard of, say, a tutorial class, it had to be admitted that the critics were right, and those who were operating the scheme would readily have agreed with the criticism. But army education catered for sundry and catholic tastes, and those responsible were always aware that it was their duty to meet the genuine demands of the soldiers and auxiliaries. For the duration of the scheme they sought to give the soldier what he wanted and 'not what he ought to have'. And more than one skilled adult education tutor was surprised by the low educational standards of many of the men, a fact which was given considerable prominence on many occasions. For example, Mr. A. J. Cummings declared on one occasion :

Perhaps the most discouraging revelation about our young citizen army is the surprisingly low standard of education among those who come from the State schools. Again and again I have heard this complaint in detail from Army officers and instructors. It is a grave reflection upon our educational system.²³

With these men and women other methods than those of the tutorial class had to be adopted. It was a tribute to these methods that, in many cases, after initial interest had been secured, it led on to work of more solid worth. "It has been my experience", stated a Workers' Educational Association tutor, "that men who at first attend a compulsory lecture, most unwillingly, become genuinely interested and astonish their officers by demanding more lectures."²⁴ It is not less significant that many of the experiments and ice-breaking methods practised by army educationists to stimulate interest among those who had had no desire or enthusiasm for further education of any sort were later adopted on a wide scale by civilian organisations.

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For its duration, however, some of the civilian educationists remained suspicious of the whole scheme and maintained that it would have made greater progress if other methods had been used. "The something more", which Mr. Ernest Green wrote about (see p. 293), was outlined by him as follows in the same article from which we have quoted :

Adult education only makes its real contribution to the development of personality when the student works out his own salvation with the tutor. We need to bring together the small groups of diligent students working in collaboration with the tutor on definite educational schemes. . . This kind of educational facility can only be provided by the organisations practised in the art of Adult Educational technique.²⁶

In dealing with 'students', Mr Green would have found few dissentients among army educationists. They differed from Mr. Green and people with similar beliefs because the latter group seemed only interested in those whose demand for further education had already been expressed²⁷ With this minority, consisting of about 20 per cent of the total strength of the Army, effort was continually being made to provide them with the best possible facilities under the harassing conditions of war. Here it must be remembered that if the services of every adult education tutor could have been secured for the Army, the number would have been grossly inadequate. The total number of Workers' Educational Association students before the War, despite the magnificent organisation which had grown up over some thirty years or so, was little more than seventy thousand, which, according to a broadsheet prepared by P.E.P., was less than 3 per cent of the possible field of recruitment.²⁸ What made this position even worse was the fact that the amount of civilian adult education had increased during the War and many tutors found that they could not continue to serve the Army in addition to their already onerous duties. A further point was that, as the demand for lectures by

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civilians grew, the Army became more critical of the standard of lectures given — and refused to take a second time lecturers who did not come up to their standards.

To the army educationist the unresponsive 80 per cent were not less important than the other group, and the opportunity of convincing them of the value of continued education was avidly seized. It was recognised that, to secure the interest of this large majority, an educational approach which would be unsuitable for more advanced students would have to be used. Through these efforts to make education possible for all, not a few people felt that an attempt was being made to encourage education for adults in the real meaning of both words.²⁹ The spirit of the whole army educational scheme was completely vindicated by one of our best-known educational writers in commenting on a series of broadcasts which the B.B.C. had arranged for the Forces.

It was [he said] a very welcome indication of a broadening outlook on the subject of adult education. Too long this has been regarded by too many as a matter of a few rather intense pursuers of knowledge gathered in a small group round a rather high-brow professor instead of as a general enlightenment of the great mass of ordinary men and women popularly conducted by every means known to modern scientific resource.³⁰

The attitude of army educationists to adult education could be described as very similar to the writer of the P.E.P. broadsheet when he wrote :

It [adult education] is not — and this is vital — a mere expedient for filling gaps in school education or even for providing training and instruction of a more advanced character. It goes deeper than this. The need for adult education is a spiritual need — at present only consciously felt by a minority ; as better provision is made to meet it, so will the need itself become deeper and more widespread.³¹

There was, as a Royal Air Force education officer once said, no time to wait until every citizen became a scholar.

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Moreover, not all the criticism was directed against educationists inside the Army. Many civilian lecturers were not successful because of their inability to get their material across to audiences which had, temporarily, at least, a different scale of values from their own. A number of the lecturers had tacitly accepted the dangerous generalisation that the Army was merely a part of the civilian population in uniform. They did not realise what discipline meant and that the soldier, to a greater extent than was realised, was segregated from the complex of civilian life, that he was, as one writer put it, "on leave from Democracy".²⁴ On the other hand, the old opiates, dog-racing, football pools, commercialised sport, motoring and so on had been much reduced, and to some extent had lost their spell. The soldier, despite deficiencies in knowledge, had, on the whole, become serious-minded, and was ready to listen to facts and opinions about topics in which his interest had been secured. Too often unsuccessful lecturers blamed their audiences for their lack of response, and seldom recognised that they were presuming too much knowledge among their listeners, were packing too much material into their talks, and were not making their subjects simple enough for audiences unused to sitting still at lectures on such subjects. Put briefly, many of these lecturers — and not a few of them were experienced tutors in the civilian world — did not succeed because they were practising methods which had nothing in common with those which had made Dobson and Young so brilliantly successful. All this was put by one tutor, who had extensive experience of army education, in the following way :

But broadly speaking the simple and devastating truth is that the "man-in-the-street", as represented by the man-in-the-army, has no use for adult education as it is generally conceived. He dislikes the very word *education*, and the mention of *lectures*, *classes* or *study* serves only to sharpen his antagonism. The tutor who goes along to an audience of soldiers expecting to repeat the usual W.E.A. technique of an hour's lecture and an hour's

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discussion is fore-doomed to failure his hour's lecture will bore them ; an hour's discussion will be beyond them.²¹

It is no platitude to say that the Army needed its own peculiar treatment and approach, and there was little surprise when Mr. W. E. Williams estimated that of " the 3000-odd names on the panels of the civilian Regional Committees, not more than 10 per cent are really up to the game of rousing the average soldier's mental interests ".²⁰ That the Army had made some real contribution to the means of winning the interest of the unconverted was pointed out by P.E.P. (Political and Economic Planning)

Even if the work in the Services [it was stated] had contributed nothing toward a wider conception of the subject, it could not be ignored because of the lessons it has taught on the value of variety in technique. Organisation on a national scale has provided the opportunity for experiment ; and experiment has proved the need for the almost unlimited extension of those informal methods of which the discussion group is the most obvious example.²³

In closing this chapter, which has been devoted to consideration of some of the problems which confronted army educationists, as well as some of the criticisms that were directed at the scheme, perhaps the balance might be re-dressed by describing the views of someone who had had a fair insight into army education .

There seems to be little public knowledge [said Mr. E. H. Carter] of the significant social and educational activities which characterise some of our mixed Ack-Ack batteries . . . These batteries include youngish A T S women and older gunners from all parts of the land, Lancs rubbing shoulders with Hants, etc. Many of them have had no sort of education since leaving school at 14. Yet here are to be found, for the first time in our social history, " mixed " groups between 19 and 45 listening to short talks and discussing freely and often very shrewdly the numerous problems of national and international affairs. . . . I venture to suggest that the War Office or any other Ministry has seldom made so fruitful a contribution to the national welfare. At any

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rate, as a former H M Inspector of Schools and Colleges and now one of the War Office lecturers to H.M. Forces, it is with gratitude that I acknowledge the pleasure and unique experience gained from the group discussions in these war-time "colleges" of practical citizenship. They have a lesson for our post-war educational reorganisation.¹²

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PART THREE

THE ARMY EDUCATION SCHEME
IN THE RELEASE PERIOD

Chapter Nineteen

The Scheme Described

As the war-time scheme of army education continued, it became obvious that by the time the War in Europe had finished, all plans would have to be completed for the educational scheme which would be introduced when the troops were waiting to be demobilised. The interest in education that had been engendered by the war-time scheme had shown that, during the period when many soldiers and auxiliaries were waiting for their release and when the pressure of their operational duties had slackened, there would be a widespread demand for facilities which would help to equip them for their re-entry into civil life. The difficulty of drawing up plans was seriously handicapped by the fact — not always appreciated by many people — that no one knew when or how the War would finish. Remembering, therefore, that 'Victory in Europe' Day was celebrated on May 8, 1945, it is a tribute to the Army Council that the first outward sign that the release period was being prepared for took place as early as December 18, 1943.

On that date Mr. P. R. (now Sir Philip) Morris, director of education for the County of Kent, who had already proved his worth as an educational administrator, was appointed director-general of army education. At the time of the appointment it was stated that the new post had been created by the War Office in view of the ever-increasing importance of education in the Army and the part it would play during the demobilisation period.¹ The first task given to the new director-general was to strengthen and unify the War Office directorates of army education and the Army Bureau of

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Current Affairs Within a few weeks schemes were drawn up to reorganise the two directorates in order that they might get down to the essential planning. These schemes had been drawn up by a Committee which had met under the chairmanship of Lord Croft. In all, the directorates were reorganised into thirteen different departments, each of which was given responsibility for one particular phase of the release scheme of education. One of the changes was that some of the staff of the directorate of military training went over to the education department to advise and work on technical matters.

Another recommendation of the Croft Committee was that a new army school of education should be set up to provide training for regimental instructors for the post-war period. This School opened at Cuerden Hall, a country estate near Preston, on May 15, 1944, and was the first practical outcome of the planning for the release period. On each of the first three courses, about a hundred students were present, these being selected only from home commands; students were of both sexes and included officers and other ranks. Later, the total number of students on each course increased and eventually reached a maximum of 250.*

The organisation of the first thirteen courses has been described by the then chief instructor.² Each course consisted of fourteen working days, the first five and a half days being given to general educational matters and the remainder to one of seven special subjects. After statements about the problems and purpose of adult education in the Army, the first part of the course went on to deal with the general principles of instruction as well as the problems of organising education in units. Throughout this work, as the chief

* In view of Government policy that the attention of the troops should not be in any way diverted from the coming battle for Europe, it was decided that the real significance of the School should at first be hidden. By selecting the majority of the students from Anti-Aircraft Command, it was possible to meet the existing requirements of that Command as well as prepare for the post-war period without making any references to demobilisation.

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instructor put it, " the implication is always that nothing is ' Education ' but everything that one does can be education ". In the actual instruction itself, lecturing was reduced to a minimum and its place was taken by groups of instructors who used team demonstrations to present purely technical matters of instruction without straining interest. Underlying all their demonstrations was the general note that instruction and humour make happy bedfellows.

The second part of the course was devoted to the special subjects which included arts and crafts, current affairs, English, mathematics, French, German, science and music. Every student made his or her own choice, and this was approved, provided their qualifications supported it. Each subject was treated to start from the point of contact which the student had had with them in everyday life. Thus the art and craftsmanship wing started with towns, town-planning and the home, and spread outwards to furniture, buildings, interior decoration, and mural painting as well as to sketching, water-colours, embroidery and lettering, design being emphasised as the basis of all these things. The current affairs wing began with the problems which are discussed in the daily press, traced their history and outlined their essentials

After the School had been operating for about six months it was possible to send former students back to the School for short refresher courses. On these the principles already enumerated were carried a stage further, and the opportunity was taken to find out what experience the students had had in their units since first attending the School. Three of these refresher courses were organised ; but, owing to the transfer of many anti-aircraft personnel to other corps and regiments, it proved difficult to trace many former students, and the courses were not well attended. The School then returned to its normal fourteen-day courses and these continued up to April 1945. All who had been connected with the School, either as staff or students, agreed

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that the quality of the work had reached a high standard at all times. Certainly, some hundreds of students returned to their units sufficiently inspired that they themselves became educational missionaries of considerable ardour.*

The first announcement of the educational release scheme to the Army as a whole took place in October 1944. Then an Army Council Instruction³ appeared referring to a supplement called *Army Education Scheme (Release Period)*. In this supplement an advanced outline of the scheme was given for the benefit of formation commanders and of commanding officers. One of the main points stressed was that the commanding officer should pay particular attention to the needs of his men, and that, with few exceptions, something should be provided for everybody. Some of the men and women with no expressed wishes would be in need of an improved standard of rudimentary education, and for them 'basic education' courses were to be provided. Similarly, the commanding officer was asked to try to meet the needs of those with insistent demands, as well as the larger number who wanted something but did not know what. At the same time, an A.B.C.A. pamphlet called *Brush-up for Civvy St.* was issued so that the regimental officer could discuss the main points of the scheme with the men themselves. The plan was modestly described as a means "for making up, so far as possible, those arrears of education and training which are a part of the debit side of War service", and the hope was entertained that the scheme

* Similar schools had been opened in some of the overseas commands, and had been equally active in preparing regimental instructors for the release period. A Middle East School, for example, had been established at Mount Carmel in Palestine and, under stimulating guidance, was achieving good results. This school catered for 100-150 students and was supplemented by background courses which were organised at the American University at Beirut. In the Central Mediterranean theatre, an Army School of Education was opened in September 1944, in the admirable premises of the University for Foreigners in Perugia, Italy. Here suitable men were sent, after being selected in their units, and at first were being trained at a rate of a hundred every month. Later the number rose to 250.

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would make an important contribution to the morale and community spirit of the Army during a difficult period.

The scheme itself was described in general terms in this pamphlet. At the outset, regimental officers were categorically told that they were to make it quite clear to the men that the educational scheme to be introduced during the release period was not intended to prepare anyone for a 'gilt-edged', guaranteed job. The business of getting soldiers into jobs, or getting them trained for jobs, would be mainly the duty of the Ministry of Labour. The Army itself could do no more than provide the men and women who were awaiting release with some kind of preliminary training which would be useful to them when they were demobilised. "For those who need it", the pamphlet stated, "it would teach the A B C of industry and commerce, so that they can go out and learn the language." For the soldiers who did not require any preliminary professional training, opportunities would be given to pursue hobbies and interests which, it was hoped, would give them more zest for the art of living. Individuals whose professional studies had been interrupted by the War were to be given a new chance to take up the threads by means of correspondence and other courses.

The varied principles of the scheme were described under eight headings. It was to be compulsory, that is, it would be an obligatory part of the working time-table. This was merely an extension of the already existing system; but, under the new regulations, educational training was to be given more emphasis and more time. Variety was introduced into the scheme in that the troops had a reasonably wide choice of what they wished to study. The third principle was that participation in the scheme, as instructor or one of the instructed, would in no way affect the individual's chances of demobilisation. (This was a point which constantly needed to be said and which, even then, was never believed by a large proportion of the Army.) To

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fit in with military organisation the new scheme was to dovetail with the existing pattern of army administration and procedure. The scheme was to be co-educational and would apply equally to men and women whenever possible. For obvious reasons, it would not be possible to put the scheme into operation at any predetermined fixed time ; according to the pamphlet, " Formations will ' lay on ' the scheme at different times, depending on what part of the world they are in and what their other circumstances are (*e.g.* static, operational) " The close collaboration with the civilian educational bodies which already existed would be continued, partly for its direct and intrinsic value to army education, and partly because, having had experience of what the civilian educational system could provide, soldiers might be more stimulated to use it after the War. It was emphasised that the new scheme would be merely a growth of something that was already there and that it would really be a wider and better equipped development of educational schemes which had been operating in the Army since the winter of 1940

Although the Army could not provide a curriculum so diverse and selective as that of a polytechnic, the War Office had attempted to provide a broad classification of subjects of study within which all students would find something near to their requirements and interests. These were grouped into six wide categories. (1) technology ; (2) general science ; (3) home, health and hobbies ; (4) man and society ; (5) commerce and the professions ; and (6) arts and crafts.

Under the heading of technology, courses would be organised in electrical and mechanical engineering, building construction and similar occupations. In general science, men and women would be given the opportunity of studying essential scientific principles as applied to manufacture and the professions or the problems of industry and society. The third category was intended to meet many different needs ; it was

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not intended to teach a wage-earning job, but would provide background knowledge for the soldier who was interested in, say, gardening or poultry-keeping, or the auxiliary who wished to know more about domestic subjects. "Man and Society" covered sociology in its wider sense, while, under "Commerce and the Professions", courses would be arranged for men and women who wished to make a serious study of business organisation or prepare to enter the Civil Service, local government or the professions. The sixth broad field, "Arts and Crafts", was intended for those who wanted to become familiar with drawing or painting or musical appreciation. "Men and Women", the pamphlet stated, "who hope to go in for printing or design or architecture or teaching will all find something in this category to provide the first principles of their special need or interest."

The organisation of the scheme showed how education in the 'interim' Army would function in a way which had not previously been possible. Instead of the existing system of two compulsory hours — A B C.A. and British Way and Purpose — there would be six to eight hours a week of education. A B.C.A. and British Way and Purpose would be retained as part of these and organised on the usual communal basis, that is, on a platoon or squad or troop basis. For the other four to six hours, the troops would be treated individually and would link up with like-minded individuals from any part of their unit to study those subjects which they selected. Where courses could be provided more efficiently and economically on a basis common to a number of units, they were to be organised at a lower formation (brigade or sub-district) level.

The Army Educational Corps was to be considerably increased in numbers and would be responsible for the general direction of the scheme. But, since the programme was to be organised on a unit basis, the key men would undoubtedly be the unit education officers, "the amateurs, whose duty it would be to publicise the alternatives in the

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curriculum and to organise the facilities which unit resources could provide ” They would be specially trained and equipped with manuals of guidance which should help them over some of their difficulties The instructors were to be selected from unit personnel and drawn from officers and other ranks. (The scheme as a whole applied equally to all ranks.) Moreover, although the educational scheme for the release period could not train men for jobs nor find jobs for men, unit education officers would be supplied with a steady stream of information which would allow them to give “ details of the various trades and professions and the qualifications required for them to those individuals who are in doubt about their careers ”.

Some of the educational activities would naturally be devoted to the passing of examinations ; to meet the needs of the Army a special examination, called the Forces Preliminary Examination, was to be introduced This examination was intended to meet the needs of men and women who wished to prepare themselves for subsequent entry to certain universities, the Civil Service or some of the professions Success in the examination would allow the candidate to be considered for entry to a university or to be exempted from the preliminary examination of the professional body concerned. It would in no way replace existing means of qualifying for entry to universities Since it was felt that some unit education officers would be tempted to assess their achievements merely by the number of certificates their units could collect, they were strongly urged to keep this ‘ pot-hunting ’ in its proper place and concentrate their energies in giving a little to the lot rather than a lot to the few. Further, since no scheme of the above magnitude could be attempted without suitable accommodation and a tremendous amount of equipment, it was heartening to find that, even at this time, the premises in which educational work could best be conducted were being earmarked and scheduled for adaptation. Books by the million were also being ordered, as were

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the tools, the raw materials, the films and other educational accessories *

Such, in brief, were the general proposals of the scheme and, during the next six months or so, regimental officers discussed them from all aspects with their men. On the whole, the proposals were enthusiastically received and any adverse comments were usually about the apparently inordinately long delay in implementing the scheme. Many of the men felt that here was a scheme that was going to help them and they wanted to get on with it.†

In the meantime, the various War Office education departments had been active in preparing the details of their particular parts of the plan. These were embodied in a booklet called the *Organisation Handbook* which was to be made available to the unit education officer. By the time *Brush-up for Civvy St.* had appeared, the draft form of this handbook was ready. To ensure that the scheme really would meet the needs of the Army, a series of conferences was arranged at Cuerden Hall, beginning in late October and running through into December 1944. In all, ten of these conferences took place, and to them travelled nearly all the Army Educational Corps personnel, A.T.S. education officers and non-commissioned officers from Britain, from British Liberation Army, as well as a few from the Middle East, the Mediterranean and India.‡ Each course was attended by

* The actual number of books approved by the Treasury up to July 1944 as an initial requirement was 2,595,000. 3750 wireless sets had also been ordered by this time.

† Some time after Army Council Instruction 1336 of 1944 and *Brush-up for Civvy St.* had appeared, a widespread attitude developed which suggested that the official announcement of the scheme had been premature. There seems no doubt that the announcement was bound up with public statements by high-ranking army officers that the War with Germany would be over before the advent of 1945. Since VE Day did not come until May 8, 1945, it presents a clear example of the difficulties of planning an educational scheme while military operations are in progress.

‡ Whether the release scheme of education would operate in India was doubtful throughout 1944, but, in March 1945, it was announced that the scheme would apply, with modifications, to British troops in India.

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about two hundred and fifty men and women of all ranks, and, after listening to statements about the proposed organisation, they were invited to discuss the scheme in all its aspects and to suggest means whereby it could be improved.

The scheme was subjected to the closest scrutiny. By the end of the courses it appeared that there could be no possible flaw in the organisation, at least so far as the planning was concerned. The majority of the people attending the conferences were very anxious that the scheme should be a success, and any suggested modification which seemed likely to make it work more smoothly was forwarded to the War Office. There the suggestions were considered, and, if approved, were included in the revised scheme.

Another duty that had been undertaken by the War Office Education Branch was the preparation of a series of handbooks which attempted to show how all the main interests of life could be used in making an educational programme for a unit. The purpose of the handbooks was to include a sufficient range of subjects and activities to provide for those with definite wishes and desires and for those whose interests needed to be awakened. There were to be six main handbooks, each dealing with one of those branches of knowledge and human activity already mentioned (see p. 320). The shape of the syllabuses in the handbooks was influenced by several factors such as the availability of books, the scheme for the Forces Preliminary Examination, and, above all, by the knowledge that the majority of the students would be overseas. Each of the handbooks was to be accompanied by a supplementary handbook dealing with the method and techniques by which the subjects should be taught. These method books would also deal with means whereby apparatus and equipment could be improvised. In addition, there would be special booklets relating to hospitals and convalescent depots, equipment and materials, and a librarian's handbook.

Nor had the possibilities of using the radio for educational

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broadcasting been overlooked. Members of the three fighting Services had met representatives of the B.B.C., and a Joint Inter-Services Committee had been formed to collaborate with the B.B.C. At that time the B.B.C. officials were, of course, unable to say how soon their stations could operate educational programmes for the Services, but they promised complete co-operation. Three general conclusions were arrived at by the Committee.

(1) For radio education to be successful, it had to form a regular part of the programme and be put on at certain fixed times.

(2) Each educational programme should run for two hours a day for six days a week. (This was later reduced to one hour a day)

(3) If educational broadcasting was to be successful, the Services had to provide adequate listening facilities and the instructors would have to know how to handle a broadcast as a teaching aid. Receiving sets had to be of the right type and carefully controlled

The part that civilians would play in the release scheme had also been considered. The Central Advisory Council for Education in H.M. Forces had recognised that, like the Services, they had reached a turning-point and, as a first step, the balance of the Council had been adjusted so that the universities, the local education authorities and the adult education organisations would now be represented in equal proportions. Although the Central Advisory Council anticipated that they would have to meet increased demands from men and women after their return to civil life, they were preparing also to meet the expected increased demands from those still in the Services by providing more connected courses and less isolated lectures

With the main outlines of the Army Education Scheme completed, the year 1945 opened with each branch of the War Office Education Department working hard to ensure that its own particular part of the organisation would be

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complete when the time came for the scheme to be implemented. Just before 1944 had ended it became evident that the Army Council was determined that the scheme should be ready, when it was announced that Brigadier (later Major-General) Cyril Lloyd was being released from his post as Deputy Adjutant-General to Twenty-first Army Group to fill the vacant post of Director of Army Education. That Field-Marshal Montgomery should have consented to release an officer with Brigadier Lloyd's distinguished record in administration was itself powerful evidence of the importance attached to army education at this time.

When the scheme was well launched and the future of army education was under active consideration, several changes were made in the senior personnel at the Directorate of Army Education. These were noted in *Nature* of March 16, 1946, as follows :

. . . The former director-general, Mr. P. R. Morris, has taken up his post as vice-chancellor of the University of Bristol, while Mr. W. E. Williams, the former director of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, has been appointed director of a corresponding civilian organisation, the Bureau of Current Affairs, which has been set up by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. The position at the War Office has now been clarified by the announcement that Major-General Cyril Lloyd—to whom we offer congratulations on his promotion—has been appointed director of Army education. The directorate of Army education and the Bureau of Current Affairs have now been merged into one directorate over which General Lloyd will preside.

General Lloyd is a graduate of University College, London, where he took a first-class honours degree in physics and mathematics. After a period of post-graduate research at Cambridge, he was appointed senior science master at Brighton Grammar School. His record during the War has been particularly distinguished and led to his appointment as Deputy-Adjutant-General with 21st Army Group under Field-Marshal Montgomery. For his services in the Normandy campaign he was invested with the C.B.E. while in Holland. In December 1944 he was recalled to Great Britain and appointed director of Army

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education at the War Office. Men of science will be pleased to hear of his recent promotion and will be glad to know that the War Office have entrusted the future of Army education to a young officer who, by his record as a soldier and as an educationist, has shown his capacity to shoulder heavy responsibilities with courage and resolution. Both qualities will be needed in General Lloyd's new post.

Now that the pattern of the scheme had been laid down, it was becoming clear that certain points stood out in high relief. The first was that the scheme did not offer a direct and full training for a job in civil life. This attitude was frequently criticised but the War Office was rightly adamant that it was beyond their power—and even that of the Ministry of Labour with whom they were working in close contact—to provide reliable information on the absorptive capacity of industries and occupations, in the release period, on which such training could be based. But it was made clear that the training offered to the Army would not be useless or merely ornamental. Within the limits of those facilities which the Army itself could offer, men and women would have every opportunity to prepare themselves for their future employment, and, whenever possible, in relation to the Ministry of Labour's training schemes.

Secondly, in the summer of 1942, the Army Council had decided that education in the Army must be one and indivisible in the sense that any distinction between 'vocational' and 'general' education was fundamentally invalid and should not be reflected in the administrative framework. It had, therefore, been decided that the final responsibility for army education should be vested in the Adjutant-General to the Forces; this policy was to continue. As education became a normal element in army life, it would become the close concern of every branch of the Staff at all levels. The effect of this decision was that in every formation education in all its aspects was to remain an "A" responsibility.

Thirdly, it had become clear that there would have to be

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considerable changes in the role and responsibilities of the Army Educational Corps. Both before and during the War, the work of many members of the Army Educational Corps had been mainly instructional. In the release period it would be an impossible task for the Army Educational Corps to act as instructors to the Army and they would become the advisers and administrators responsible for the smooth running of the scheme.

Nor were the inevitable difficulties that would arise given scant attention or deliberately overlooked. Even at this time it was recognised that many problems lay ahead, particularly as the standards set were high. The world shortage of books and materials was bound to affect the scheme. Many people were concerned about the shortage of capable instructors that was almost certain to arise, while others, with an eye to working in small units, sorrowfully realised that the Army had been organised for military purposes and that it could not be inverted for the benefit of educationists. Yet, despite all the difficulties, there was the consoling thought that the Army had tackled much bigger issues and had given effective answers. Provided that its objective were clear and that its spirit had been roused, there seemed no reason why the Army should not make as great a success of this gigantic educational scheme as it had done in military operations.

On February 28, 1945, a series of Army Council Instructions was issued⁴ describing the organisation and application of the Army Education Scheme (Release Period). It was expressly stated that the scheme would not be implemented before the cessation of hostilities with Germany, except in those units which were given special permission by the War Office. The scheme was to apply to all units with the exception of: (a) War Office schools of instruction; (b) training units; (c) Army patients in military, E.M.S., auxiliary and Ministry of Pensions hospitals, military convalescent depots and long-term rehabilitation centres

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(separate provision was made for these and was described in a special handbook ^s, and (d) soldiers under sentence in detention barracks and military prisons, for whom special arrangements were also made. For the permanent staffs of the above types of units, however, the scheme was to be applied as far as it was practicable. In the case of War Office controlled units, the War Office was left to decide when the Army Education Scheme would begin to operate. Since many units had important military work to do in the release period, it was left to general officers commanding-in-chief at home and overseas to determine in which units under their command the Army Education Scheme would and would not operate. In those units where the Army Education Scheme would not be carried out, the war-time scheme was to continue.

To help the commanding officer in preparing the scheme for his unit, the Army Council Instructions — which ran to twenty-three sides of closely packed print — described the organisation of the scheme in great detail and gave him authority to begin with his planning. When the general officer commanding-in-chief had ordered the implementation of the Army Education Scheme in a unit, the commanding officer was to select and appoint a unit education officer. The latter was to be chosen for his keenness and administrative ability, and, if the commanding officer decided that no one in his unit was suitable, the formation commander would supply one by cross-posting one from another unit. For a unit of a lieutenant-colonel's command, the unit education officer was normally to be selected from among the majors and captains on the unit establishment. This unit education officer would be supported by one officer and six sergeants who would act as full-time instructors. If privates or corporals were selected as full-time instructors, they were to be made up to paid local sergeants. In smaller or larger units similar appointments could be made on a *pro rata* basis, and corresponding appointments with similar ranks were to be

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made in the A.T.S. units. In all units part-time instructors were to be appointed as they were required, they would not receive promotion or additional pay, and in no case were they to be employed on educational duties for more than three-quarters of the time devoted by the full-time instructors. Where units had not suitable personnel for appointment as full-time instructors or needed part-time instructors for special classes, the formation commander could, at his discretion, arrange for the necessary exchange of instructors between units.

The arrangement for books was as follows. Text-books were to be issued by the War Office when demanded for class use; the total number held by a unit was not normally to exceed two-thirds of the total number of men and women on the unit strength. Special books were to be available for instructors. Further, each unit (or group of units that was combined for educational purposes) of a total strength of five hundred or more, would receive a standard general library of about four hundred books. The titles of the various unit library books had been selected after consultation with various professional bodies, and, like the text-books for unit instructors, had sometimes to be altered because of the overstrained position of the publishing industry. Besides the books already mentioned, each command was to set up a command library of some five thousand books which would supplement those in the units and be available for loan to any individual in the command.

For units where the Army Education Scheme was being carried on, the method of obtaining equipment, materials and stationery, as well as the authorised scales, which was based on numbers of students, was to be described in a separate Equipment and Materials Handbook, which was to be issued later. The use of transport for attendance at classes and visits to places of educational interest was also explained in these instructions. For instructors and students attending compulsory classes in units and formations, the

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usual rules governing the use of military transport were to apply. Students attending classes organised by local education authorities or other educational organisations would be allowed free transport for not more than four return journeys a week ; this transport would only be permitted for distances (from unit to class) of more than two or less than twenty miles. When visits to places of educational interest were arranged, free transport would be permitted only once a month, except where the visits were designed to supplement instruction in technical, scientific or commercial subjects. For these visits transport would be provided for journeys of more than two miles distance and less than forty.

The instructions also gave details of the Forces Preliminary Examination. This examination had been established, in consultation with the universities, to meet the needs of men and women in the Army who wished to become eligible either to be considered for entry to a university or to qualify for exemption from preliminary examinations of certain professional bodies. It was re-emphasised that the examination would not be an alternative to the existing means of qualifying for entrance to the universities and for the diplomas of the various professional bodies. A candidate who was successful in obtaining the Forces Preliminary Examination might have to attend a personal interview with the authorities concerned and, often, produce evidence of proficiency in certain additional subjects. This examination was open to all ranks and could be taken any time up to six months after the date of their release ; it would be held not more than twice a year in commands in which the Army Education Scheme had been authorised. To help serving men and women, the examination was divided into two parts which could be taken separately. In Part 1 a pass was required in all three subjects, which were English, mathematics or Latin, and general knowledge. A pass was required in any two subjects from Part 2. These included natural sciences or household science or Latin, history or

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geography, French or German, social sciences, additional mathematics or geometrical and mechanical drawing.

At the "apex of the whole scheme" were to be specially residential educational institutions which, stated the Army Council Instructions, were to be called formation colleges. The purpose of these colleges was described as twofold. First, they were to give opportunities for further education to men and women who wished to pursue general and technical studies at a more advanced stage than was possible in lower formations and units. Secondly, they were to train instructors for the Army Education Scheme. One formation college was to be established in each command at home, one in British Liberation Army, and one each in Central Mediterranean Force and Middle East Force. They were to be open to all ranks and would either cater for six hundred, eight hundred or a thousand students. The courses offered at formation colleges would last a month and provide about a hundred hours of instruction. Where appropriate, they would be directly related to the Government's training schemes and would take account of the educational qualifications required by students who wished to be considered for admission to universities, other higher educational institutions and the professions. At the same time, it was intended that narrow specialisation should be avoided and that, for all students, current affairs, citizenship and physical training should be included.

The formation colleges would normally be organised in seven departments: pure and applied science and mathematics, modern studies, art and crafts, domestic science, commerce, trades and an instructor training department. So far as possible, the following types of students were to be provided for: (a) those whose technical or professional studies were interrupted by military service and who needed to continue them beyond the stage possible at unit or lower formation level; (b) those whose studies at unit or lower formation level had proved them specially capable of profiting

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from more advanced studies ; (c) those who needed to extend or refresh their trade or professional qualifications ; and (d) those who were selected for training as instructors in units, lower formations and formation colleges. Priority for admission was to be given first to potential instructors, and then to those who were due for early release. Instructors for the staffs of formation colleges were to be drawn from all arms of the Service, the War Office reserving the right to approve the appointment of the commandant and the heads of departments. The employment of part-time civilian lecturers and teachers would be permitted. Each formation college would provide communal and residential accommodation for all ranks and would be as compactly housed as possible for efficient administration and educational control. Any plant and equipment (including workshop equipment) available in commands would, with War Office consent, be transferred to formation colleges for educational purposes, after military requirements had been met. As opportunity occurred, the War Office would also make plant and equipment available for instructional purposes.

In order that soldiers and auxiliaries would have written evidence of the courses they had pursued under the Army Education Scheme a new army form (*W5335*) was introduced and was to be kept in the back pocket of the individual's Army Book 64. On this form all classes attended were to be recorded to ensure continuity of education under the scheme and to provide the unit education officers with details that could be included in the Soldier's Release Leave Book.

From the foregoing it can be seen that a scheme conceived on the widest possible basis had been prepared, and not without imagination or skill in administration and organisation. The appearance of Army Council Instruction 236-244 caused a stir throughout the Army, and many commanding officers, after recovering their breath, began to make preliminary preparations for beginning the scheme in their units. By means of A.B.C.A. discussions, displays in

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the information room and elsewhere, talks from regimental officers and members of the Army Educational Corps, by a series of broadcasts and newspaper articles and the issue of questionnaires, gradually soldiers and auxiliaries became familiar with details of the scheme and, although their eyes were resolutely fixed on the coming battle for Germany, their interest in the Release Scheme of Education became charged with expectancy. In May 1945, authority was given for the scheme to take effect in the Gibraltar Command, and, in June a War Office letter stated that July 1 was to be regarded as the general date for the beginning of the scheme, with the end of September as the date on which the scheme should be a going concern in those units where it had been implemented. In many units in Anti-Aircraft Command, the Army Educational Scheme had already been working unofficially, and now, with official sanction, other units turned over to educational work. Other home commands also took July 1 as the official inauguration day and the compulsory scheme was immediately introduced in many units. Concurrently with the announcement to the Army that the Army Education Scheme would begin in some units on July 1, a pamphlet called *The Army Education Scheme — the Plan for the Release Period* was put on sale by H.M. Stationery Office so that civilians, too, could know what provision the Army was making for its men and women during the difficult period when they were waiting, impatiently and anxiously, for their release.

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Chapter Twenty

The Scheme in Practice

WHEN VE (Victory in Europe) Day was announced on May 8, 1945, the Armed Forces of Great Britain were re-aligned with those of her Allies for the vigorous prosecution of the war against Japan. The might and resources of Japan were such that all the military authorities of the Allies believed that at least another fifteen months would be needed to bring the War in the Far East to a victorious end.

At this time it was clear that the scheme whereby men and women were to be released from the Services according to their age and length of service had been based on this assumption and that release would be a smooth, gradual and regular process.* As soldiers and auxiliaries in the lower age and Service groups were released, so younger men and women would be called up to take their places and the Army would be maintained at sufficient strength to enable it, in conjunction with its sister Services and other Allies, to end the armed resistance of Japan as quickly as possible.

To the educationists in the Army, therefore, it seemed that the Release Scheme of Education would also begin to evolve as a gradual measure, and as the places of the older men and women due for release were taken by the younger men who would be coming forward for military training.

* Under the Re-allocation of Manpower Act, soldiers and auxiliaries in the Army were assessed on a points basis worked out in terms of two factors, age and length of service. They were then placed in groups which became known as age and service groups, those in the lower age and service groups carrying the highest number of points and so were eligible for priority in release.

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The educational planners at the War Office expected, quite rightly and naturally, that the Army Education Scheme would be implemented very slowly to begin with and, after going through the inevitable teething troubles, would develop to its full size as military commitments grew less.

But the military authorities were wrong and the strength of resistance of the Japanese by the middle of 1945 had been greatly over-estimated. On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and on August 10 Japan was out of the War. The period between VE Day and VJ (Victory over Japan) Day, instead of taking more than a year, had mercifully lasted only three months, and the idea of an education scheme slowly developing to fit the mould of an Army awaiting gradual release was given a rude shaking. Instead of a 'moratorium' period of three months between VE Day and the first releases from the Army, the time was cut by a half to six weeks, and when VJ Day arrived it at once became obvious that the overall time for demobilisation would have to be considerably contracted. This change of policy was announced on several occasions by the new Government after it took over in office in August 1945.

Like the military authorities, the educational authorities of the British Army were also faced with a new situation. Instead of a period of months in which the Army Education Scheme could unfold to meet the requirements of the men and women awaiting release, a position had been reached in which hundreds of thousands of men and women had suddenly lost their former occupations * and were naturally turning to the educational scheme of which they had heard and expected so much. A contingency had arisen which could not have been foreseen and which would tax the resources of the army educational authorities to the utmost.

* The bulk of the Army, of course, for many months after VJ Day remained as busy as it had been before. Some units like Royal Army Pay Corps and Records Offices, for example, were, for reasons which need not be enumerated, probably busier during the release period than they had been hitherto.

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In some quarters it was argued that to continue with a scheme so gigantically conceived during such a time of rapid change and upheaval amounted to little more than madness and would lead to no profitable results.

Whether they were mad or not, there was no doubt among members of the Army Educational Corps and many men and women in the Army that the scheme should go on. And go on it did, in some units with unprecedented success; in others with dismal failure because it was never really tried. Despite the fact that education in the release period was bound to be a matter of improvising rather than a static system which could be easily planned and handled, despite the fact that classes were always waxing and waning according to the incidence of releases and postings, it is true to say that, although educational results can never be measured, enough was achieved during this period which will ever redound to the credit of the British Army and which, if wisely and efficiently followed up, would give an unprecedented fillip to democracy in Britain. Imperfections and deficiencies in army education there certainly were, but most of these were due to circumstances rather than to lack of foresight or incompetence. No one claimed that the effects of army education could be as lasting as educational schemes which were allowed to evolve under more settled conditions. What was claimed was that army education had opened the door for so many to a world which had previously been visited by so few. As one correspondent put it, "No statistics will reveal how much intellectual curiosity has been aroused, what new interests have been developed, and how many personalities have been enriched and deepened by introducing them to the fruits of human wisdom and creative power" ¹

The rest of this chapter will be concerned with a brief account of the way in which the Army Education Scheme (Release Period) developed, and of the way it was adapted to meet the needs of units and of individuals.

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The first stock-taking was made in September 1945, about three months after the official implementation of the scheme. By this time the general direction which the Army Education Scheme was taking had been revealed, and subsequent reports indicated that no great changes later occurred. As had been foreseen, though units of all arms were operating the scheme, either wholly or partially, it had been found almost impossible to carry out educational activities in those working units of the Royal Engineers, Royal Signals, Royal Army Service Corps, Royal Army Medical Corps, Royal Army Pay Corps and Pioneer Corps where the pressure of work had not diminished with the cessation of hostilities. Further, small units, of which the Army contains so many and consisting of merely a handful of men and possessing limited internal resources, presented special problems which were only partially solved by grouping them on a geographical basis or by attaching them to larger units.

Units which were directly administered by the War Office also presented formidable difficulties. In units which were still engaged in training men for military duties, the Release Scheme of Education was generally confined to the administrative staff, the instructional staff continuing with the war-time scheme of education (compulsory weekly sessions of British Way and Purpose and Army Bureau of Current Affairs), and the trainees with such special programmes as had been decided for them.

Yet, despite all the difficulties, just four months after the collapse of Germany it was possible to state that, in one home command (Anti-Aircraft), two-thirds of the units were engaged on educational programmes and in very few cases were those units doing less than the stipulated six hours a week; in many cases they were doing more. In other commands the number of 'implementing' units was not so high, but, on the whole, the number of men and women in the British Army who were pursuing some kind of disciplined study in the King's time was very high. There

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was the case, for example, of one holding battalion in Northern Command where every single man out of 1800 was taking some part in an education programme.

Nor was this the end of the response. Successive reports indicated that the number of classes conducted on a voluntary basis in units had been considerably stimulated by the introduction of the Army Education Scheme. Classes for handicrafts and in workshops, for music and art appreciation, groups for debates and discussions, visits to places and undertakings of educational interest, all these supplemented the formal classes held under the scheme. They provided another reminder that the Army Education Scheme was no super-imposition from the War Office on units.

The British Army of the Rhine (B.A.O.R.) was a good example of the enthusiasm with which men switched from the pursuit of war to that of peace. Right up to the day of the 'cease-fire' on May 8, 1945, the units and formations of the B.A.O.R. had been heavily engaged in active operations. With the cease-fire these units assumed a static operational role. There had been no period to prepare for the education scheme, although it was generally recognised that a great deal of preparation both on the ground and all staff-levels was essential. Yet, almost immediately, an impressive volume of spontaneous educational activity sprung up in units and formations throughout the theatre and was a constant source of encouragement to the trained education officers who were later appointed to direct the scheme and who were able to suggest means whereby the educational programmes could be of more lasting benefit to the soldiers. From the outset it was clear that units and formations in B.A.O.R. were determined to have all the education they could get — letters were frequently seen in British newspapers from self-appointed unit education officers stationed in B.A.O.R. appealing for library books and text-books to help them to help their men — and the War Office quickly recognised that this spirit could only be met by providing the troops of

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B.A.O.R. with the guidance and material which they so badly needed.

By September 1945 it was possible to say that a fair number of the needs had been met and that 70 per cent of the units in B.A.O.R. were carrying out educational schemes. This did not mean that nearly three-quarters of all of the men in B.A.O.R. were engaged on educational activities for a compulsory period each week. Nor did it mean that the work being done was evenly distributed throughout the whole of the command. What it did mean was that some formations were able to allow all their personnel to take part in a programme of a full six hours a week ; in other formations, men in the earlier age and service release groups were allowed to exceed that time but the educational programme for those in the higher age and service groups was often limited or non-existent. In spite of the difficulties of an army of occupation, including the heavy task of dealing with millions of displaced persons and allied and enemy prisoners of war in Germany, some remarkable work was being done and amply justified the remark that the test of a democracy was the attention it paid to adult education.

An account by a civilian who had spent some time with the troops in Germany, gives some convincing details of the spirit in which the Army Education Scheme was being tackled. First, he pointed out, the system of bringing men to an education centre for one day a week had been proved to work much better than classes and lectures in six separate hours and was the system which was in general use. Then, he went on to say :

Suitable premises for Army schools can be found or reconditioned even in the most devastated areas of Germany, such as the Ruhr. In some cases a part of the barracks or other quarters can be fitted up ; in others the factory or office of an industrial undertaking which has surprisingly escaped destruction is available. Sometimes a large residence can be found. Some equipment can also usually be found on the spot. The most fortunate

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units use a German technical school and its equipment. German teachers, duly vetted by the security department, may be employed for the teaching of crafts. I have seen a German teacher of carpentry instructing an English class efficiently and happily, even though he had no English and none of the men knew German. . . Most of the divisions have established a special school for more advanced courses intended particularly for men soon to be released. So far as possible men are enabled to spend a large part of their last months in the Army in preparation for return to civil life. The schools are placed in the most attractive surroundings. The Guards Division, which is occupying part of the Rhine area, has its school at Bonn University; a division, quartered in the Ruhr area, amid incredible destruction, has appropriated a home for Hitlerite leaders set among wooded hills. Another division, which is quartered about the Luneburg Heath, is housing its school in a vast hidden explosive factory, with its most modern offices, workers' canteen and residences for the directors. The workshops of the factory are now the workshops and laboratories for courses in electricity, engineering and chemistry; the offices are the classrooms and the library is used by those taking courses in commercial and academic subjects. Six hundred men at a time come to the school for a period ranging from one to three months. . . . The students, whose average age is about 30, receive not only a pre-vocational training but a new outlook on life. They will return to England mentally alert and ready to embark upon the full vocational course for their chosen profession.²

His remarks were amply borne out by other observers. In writing of the Study Centre which had been opened in the former Hitler Youth Club in Hamburg, Sir Ronald Adam said:

They are, of course, palatial premises, and I must confess that they were magnificently equipped with educational gear—including an electric beer-engine! When I saw the Hamburg Study Centre the other day it was a flourishing community centre providing classes and groups and circles in twenty different fields of interest.³

The relative popularity of subjects being taken under the Army Education Scheme revealed some interesting facts

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When the Release Scheme of Education had been planned, the subjects offered had all been grouped under six broad heads: technical, arts and crafts, commerce, home and health, man and society, and science. It was in this order that subjects were asked for, technical subjects being by far the greatest in demand. Most units were running successful classes in practical subjects and it suggested that the approach through the hand was much more appealing than the approach through the head. For a long time these practical subjects were limited in scope by lack of materials, but, as the equipment and materials began to trickle through, work of a much more advanced nature could be and was attempted.

In arts and crafts the types of classes held were numerous and varied and were everywhere popular. One anti-aircraft group was able to run courses for training instructors for arts and crafts at an unofficial centre and the standard of achievement was remarkably high. In another anti-aircraft group, an interest in art was stimulated by visits to large country houses, where either the owner or a civilian guide-lecturer, supplied by the Regional Committee for Education in H.M. Forces, talked about the pictures which the owner had collected. There was considerable enthusiasm for woodwork, toy-making, leatherwork, dress-making and musical appreciation, but drama was usually pursued as a voluntary activity and had few full-time adherents.

The number of science classes was very small and commands reported that there was little demand. This may have been a superficial deduction, however, and closer analysis showed that the apparent lack of interest might have been due to the great scarcity of competent instructors and to the lack of facilities and equipment for teaching science. It was often true that many men and women, who would have wished to study a science subject, were deterred because they felt there was no point in asking for something which they were unlikely to get. There was some demand for elementary mathematics, technical drawing and workshop and motor

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transport, however, and it was shown on numerous occasions that soldiers and auxiliaries were capable of being interested in the impact of science on their daily lives. Courses designed with this object in view were invariably successful.

The very attractive courses set out under 'home and health' were such as to appeal to almost every man and woman, the men being particularly interested in practical subjects like boot-making, household repairing, upholstery and gardening. The auxiliaries were especially keen on cookery and household science, but there were numerous records of A.T.S. taking classes in household repairs, woodwork and even boot-repairing. In many of these subjects which were labelled under the general heading of 'home and health', the keenness of the students was such that the education rooms were often as fully occupied during the off-duty hours as they were in the compulsory periods during the day.

Under 'commerce' there was a strong demand for English, book-keeping, geography, French, German and shorthand. Instruction in these subjects was usually of a fairly specialised type and given to limited numbers and often it was found more satisfactory to send the students to evening classes at civilian institutes. From the beginning there was a strong demand for typewriting, but the lack of machines made it difficult to arrange classes. Later, typewriters became more readily available and it was then possible to arrange classes to satisfy at least a fair proportion of the demand. These typewriting classes were often arranged at centralised places and were attended by men and women from units in the area.

What was surprising was that, except for a small demand for languages, the group of subjects which went under the general title of 'man and society' had an even smaller appeal than had been expected. From many sources evidence was collected to show that only a small percentage of the men and women had any real interest in what appeared to them

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to be 'school' subjects like history and geography. One group commander in anti-aircraft command was so concerned about the apparent lack of interest in the 'academic' studies that he insisted that all men and women doing 'education' in his group should do either English or mathematics as one of their subjects. The comments of his flock have never been reported. Apart from the interests of the students, the types of subjects chosen were, of course, dependent upon the instructors available. The general opinion was that the number of technical instructors available was adequate, and, on the whole, their standard was good. In technical units like those of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers there was often a surplus of them, and here the Army helped itself by arranging for some of these technical instructors who were not needed in their own units to be temporarily attached to non-technical units where they were welcomed by men who wanted guidance in technical studies.

In 'science' there was also a great shortage of instructors while in 'home and health' it was always difficult to find enough instructors to go round. The supply of instructors in subjects grouped under 'commerce' was barely sufficient and varied enormously from command to command. Despite the big demand for 'arts and crafts' the number of instructors was nearly always just about enough, but their standard varied greatly. The most surprising feature of the instructor position was the fact that the limited appeal for 'man and society' subjects was not due to the shortage of instructors; the number available was always more than adequate to meet demands and, in general, the quality was good.

Here a word must be said about the quality of these army teachers. Many observers who watched army classes in progress were surprised by the high standard of the instructors; other observers were shocked to think that what they had seen should be allowed to masquerade as 'adult

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education' There was, of course, a considerable element of luck in a unit's provision of instructors; some abounded in professional and amateur pedagogues but other units were ill-equipped. To the observers who had been favourably impressed it was pointed out that the Army contained a large proportion of ex-civilian schoolmasters — there were about 16,000 scattered throughout the Army, only a few thousand of whom were in the Army Educational Corps — and, further, many men had been given competent training to act as military instructors. A number of these who had sufficient 'background' were able to make the necessary adjustment and became useful educational instructors. To the observers who had been horrified that untrained, unqualified and uninspiring instructors should be given charge of a class, the answer was very simple if not always convincing. Unless the Army was to make use of its own resources, then the comparatively slender resources of the civilian population and of the qualified teachers inside the Army would be quite inadequate to provide educational opportunities for the millions of men who were awaiting release. On the whole it could not be claimed that the standard of instruction in the Army Education Scheme was ever really high. In the early stages there were certain advantages because the age and service release groups below thirty included a large number of unit education officers and instructors who were qualified teachers. As these groups were released from the Army the standard of instruction was bound to go down, and by Christmas 1945, probably the greatest single factor which was causing concern in the minds of those who were determined to make the scheme as successful as possible was the diminishing number and the low standard of instructors. To meet the serious 'run-down' of competent instructors, many remedies were tried but not always with much success.

The arrangement whereby some classes were conducted at what was called lower-formation level became one of the most significant developments of the scheme. It can probably be

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best illustrated by referring to the particular arrangements that were made in one command. In Anti-Aircraft Command, for example, the general principle laid down was that units would only organise classes in those subjects where the standard of instruction was satisfactory. Usually, units were expected to be able to arrange classes for students at a fairly elementary grade. Wherever units were unable, either economically or competently, to arrange classes, their demands were passed on to brigade headquarters. The brigade education officer then tried to co-ordinate classes within the brigade on *unit* sites and using *unit* instructors. Demands which the brigade education officer was unable to satisfy in this way were passed on to the group headquarters where they were dealt with at the group school, a school which was administered directly by the Army Educational Corps and where the instructors were often members of the Army Educational Corps. Those subjects which could not be tackled at the group school were in turn passed on to Anti-Aircraft Command headquarters where they were provided for either at the command education centre or at the formation college (see p. 367), according to the nature and standard of instruction required. At first without official war establishments (for administrative and instructional staffs, equipment, materials and so on), Anti-Aircraft Command had the following centres working almost continuously within three months of the official beginning of the Army Education Scheme: an Anti-Aircraft Command education centre, a basic education centre, an arts and crafts instruction training centre and a general education and a home management centre in each of the eight or nine anti-aircraft groups. In the B.A.O.R., within three months of VE Day, there were two corps schools, seven divisional schools and twenty-seven brigade schools. By Christmas 1945 there were eighty-two of these formation schools in B.A.O.R. The schools were used for both instructor training and study courses based on a wide range of subjects.

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The part played by the Auxiliary Territorial Service in the Army Education Scheme showed some differences from the men. Most A.T.S. were employed on tasks allotted by military units and very often the extent to which they could be released for educational purposes was determined by the military officer employing them ; like some male units, the work of many A.T.S. companies had increased since VJ Day. From the auxiliaries' point of view this was a difficulty which was never completely overcome, and there is no doubt that in many units A.T.S. education suffered, if, indeed, it ever got going. A further difficulty was that it was often difficult to find officers capable of organising educational activities and, more often than not, the total number of staff officers (A.T.S.) for education was below the number that had been decided by the War Office to be adequate.

But there were not always disadvantages, and where the military commanding officer was enthusiastic about education for his men, the auxiliaries were given equal opportunities

So far as possible the educational time-table in these 'mixed' units was drawn up on a co-educational basis. Generally, however, the A.T.S. preferred to follow subjects which did not particularly interest the men, like household economy, domestic science and cooking. There was also a fair demand from the auxiliaries for commercial subjects and for crafts, with emphasis on dress-making, design and embroidery. Of the subjects studied on a co-educational basis, commerce, history, geography, economics, woodwork, motor transport and handicrafts were the more popular with the A.T.S.

For some months after VE Day, the total number of A.T.S. units which was implementing the Army Education Scheme was not very high. Later the position improved, and by December 1945 some districts were able to report that all their A.T.S. companies had organised a scheme in their units. In many cases, where the auxiliaries could not attend classes in their own units, they were allowed to go to resi-

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dential courses which were specially arranged for them. At one period there were forty to fifty domestic science courses running concurrently in different parts of the country. Moreover, despite the overwhelming demand for domestic subjects, the range of A.T.S. interests was extensive. Apart from the work in units, one command alone organised courses for auxiliaries in commerce, languages, music, drama, art and handicrafts and home and health subjects. These courses became increasingly popular, and as time went on became recognised as the most suitable means of providing educational opportunities for the Auxiliary Territorial Service.

Auxiliaries in the earlier age and service groups were given priority to attend these courses, and, in January 1946, this policy was given official War Office sanction when a letter appeared stating that, as an emergency measure, short full-time courses were to be provided for members of the A.T.S. who were shortly due for release and who would not otherwise receive the full benefits of the Army Education Scheme. The courses, which were normally of fourteen days' duration, were particularly designed to give an introduction to pre-vocational training for young women, a large proportion of whom had not been established in civilian employment before entering the Auxiliary Territorial Service and who were in particular danger of slipping into blind-alley occupations. Many auxiliaries had, of course, interests which could not well be met by these *ad hoc* courses and for them 'personal benefit' courses at formation colleges were continued (see p. 367).

It had been made clear when the original plans for the Army Education Scheme had been announced that the facilities which would be provided under the scheme would not in general allow for specific vocational training but only for training which might broadly be described as pre-vocational (see p. 319). The only help of a vocational nature that could be promised was that of providing information

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about jobs and careers and possible openings in business, industry, agriculture and the professions. Here the War Office rose to its task magnificently and, in close liaison with the Ministry of Labour, poured out a cascade of booklets and leaflets which could be made available to men and women in units. Advice on how to present this material was also given, while the whole scheme was cemented by making use of the services of Ministry of Labour lecturers, who toured units to pass on up-to-date information, and by close co-operation between unit education officers and resettlement advice centres which had been set up in every fair-sized town by the Ministry of Labour principally to advise discharged Service men and women about their prospects and means of finding employment.

The following were the issues on which most information had been requested by the troops: the emergency training of teachers scheme; vocational training courses, the interrupted apprenticeship scheme; the further education and training scheme; the attitude of trade unions to Ministry of Labour trainees; commercial training for the small business man; opportunities in the home and colonial Civil Services; facilities for emigration; and the range of Government positions open to ex-soldiers.

Of pre-vocational training enough evidence has been presented to show that the Army was making extensive use of its opportunities and that, within a short period of VE Day, a useful amount of education which might be described as pre-vocational was going on. Yet, from the outset, there had been a great deal of discontent with the Army Education Scheme as announced to the troops because of the omission of facilities which would lead to training for specific jobs.*

It was a commonplace to everyone in the Army that,

* There were, of course, the conversion courses for tradesmen and other courses which were to be run at formation colleges (see p. 367), but these were felt to be much too few to be of real use to the great army of men who would soon be seeking civilian employment

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within a short time after the end of the War, the only topics of discussion were the date of the individual's release and the job he was going back to. For many men and women education would be admitted to their conversations but only when it related to 'training for jobs'.

It came as no surprise, therefore, to people who were operating army education in units to find that, in August 1945, a letter was issued from the War Office giving "further guidance to Commands in organising vocational courses". This letter contained the necessary caution that the vocational courses envisaged could only meet the needs of a moderate proportion of the whole Army, and that not too much stress was to be laid on this one aspect of education to the detriment of the Army Education Scheme as a whole. But, financial provision having been arranged, the point that some vocational training would be encouraged had been conceded, and this undoubtedly gave a fillip to the Army Education Scheme. Different types of courses were recommended for various types of potential students, ranging from those who wished to be trained 'from scratch' for a skilled occupation to professional men and women who had already obtained university qualifications. These courses were taken up with enthusiasm, but it stands to the credit of unit education officers that they were never allowed to become the dominating trend in the Army Education Scheme.

A month or so later another advance was made in providing opportunities for vocational training. With official encouragement of training for jobs, many units had arranged for their soldiers to take their training in firms under civilian employers. The War Office agreed that this should continue, but restricted the field to certain types of students. These included the 'from scratch' aspirants previously described as well as men and women who wished to be given 'refresher' training for jobs which they had already begun or qualified in before the War. The training in civilian establishments for 'refresher' students could either be part-time

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or full-time ; if it were full-time the provision was made that it should not exceed one month. For the ' from scratch ' students the training was to be full-time only and under strict quantitative control. Here the War Office acted in the closest liaison with the Ministry of Labour and from time to time issued instructions about the type and number of courses that men could pursue. These were closely linked to employment vacancies in the country as a whole, and on each occasion the War Office gave specific instructions to each command about the maximum number of men who could do this vocational training in civilian establishments.

In all these courses arrangements were made whereby the firms could obtain indemnities for any legitimate damages or demands that were made by ' trainees '. Payment by the firm for work done by the trainees was not allowed nor was payment given to the firm for the training they provided.

The preceding account has been mainly confined to the growth of the Army Education Scheme in home commands and in north-west Europe. But, allowing for different circumstances, the work also went on in other overseas theatres. In the Central Mediterranean and Middle East Forces the scheme developed in much the same way that it was doing at home, although in the Central Mediterranean Force there were added difficulties because of extensive troop movements in Italy and Austria. In India the Army Education Scheme was not introduced officially until November 1945, and developed slowly under difficult conditions.

In some parts of India, however, in Ceylon and in parts of Burma the Army Education Scheme was tackled with enthusiasm and achieved profitable results.

One division which determined that its waiting time in Burma should be used to good purpose was the 82nd (West African) Division of the West African Expeditionary Force.⁴ Throughout the War, army education had been an important part of the West African soldier's daily routine. In West

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Africa itself, instruction had been given in English and general knowledge by African army and civilian schoolmasters. As with the East African troops (see p 252), this teaching had aimed at the elimination of illiteracy in the ranks, and some success had been attained by the time the West African Expeditionary Force sailed for combat service in South-East Asia Command.

In jungle warfare these African troops were able to attempt little education. When the War ended, the scope for army education was greatly enlarged, and plans were drawn up to bridge the transitional period before the troops returned to civilian life. To help these men to prepare for their future lives in Africa, a general education and 'vocational' scheme was prepared to provide for men who were literate, semi-literate and illiterate. The first group, consisting of men who had a fluent knowledge of English, spoken or written, were taught English, mathematics, geography, history and the essentials of good citizenship. The semi-literates were helped to read and write elementary English, while members of the third group were taught to read and write their own native language.

The 'vocational' work was done mainly in units but also in centralised schools. Training was given in tailoring, carpentry, shoe-making and motor mechanics; about two thousand men passed through the centres in a period of three months. Although, at this time, the War Office correspondence courses were not available to these West African troops, the keenness of the men was shown by the fact that, throughout their service overseas, many African soldiers had taken correspondence courses with private schools in Great Britain and India. They were given extra time and facilities for study after Japan had been defeated.

This description of army education in Burma was typical of so many other divisions out there. While the war with Japan continued, it was difficult to develop educational work on any considerable scale. When the war ended, it was still

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difficult — but difficulties were often overcome, and some useful educational results were achieved.

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Chapter Twenty-One

The Scheme in Practice (*continued*)

FORCES EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTS

A FEATURE which had invigorated army education throughout the Second World War was the way in which teaching aids of all kinds were encouraged and used. Six years to the day that war was declared on Germany, it was announced that a device which had hitherto been used as a powerful instrument of war would now be used as a teaching aid under the Army Education Scheme. This powerful reinforcement was broadcasting. Some time before it had been announced that the British Broadcasting Corporation had agreed to provide a special service of broadcasts which would fit closely into the Services' education schemes. Here the staff of the British Broadcasting Corporation deserve the highest commendation. Despite their preoccupations with all the problems that had beset them during the War and which had become more complicated with the armistice, when approached by the Service education departments they readily agreed to collaborate. From the beginning, the Forces Educational Broadcasts were looked upon as purely experimental, and criticism was invited from those who were using the broadcasts.

Every week eighteen different programmes were broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation, each lasting twenty minutes and covering a wide range of subjects. To help the instructor, the types of broadcasts were placed in four classes. Some were planned as a stimulating supplement to courses of instruction in one of the subjects taken by the

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class like history, geography, science, citizenship or home interests. Others were designed to give special training in listening to sound and included modern languages and music. Then there were the broadcasts which aimed at stimulating interest and appreciation by 'performances' like readings of poetry and prose. The last series provided good material for group discussion, and included broadcasts on current affairs, aspects of industry, commerce and clear thinking. These divisions, of course, were purely for convenience, and often subjects which were placed in one division could be and were more profitably used in another.

That the broadcasts had been planned to meet the actual needs of the Services was shown by the fact that each series lasted only six weeks; this was the maximum time for which most units in the British Army could plan ahead. Moreover, from the beginning it was recognised that it might be difficult in many units to arrange for continuous listening even to six weekly programmes, and, so far as possible, the British Broadcasting Corporation arranged each broadcast to be complete in itself. Further, at the end of every six-weekly series, the Corporation arranged "Request Weeks", when programmes which had been genuinely asked for by soldiers and auxiliaries were transmitted.

Apart from the first series, which hit the Army rather like a thunderbolt, programmes of the broadcasts were issued well in advance of the transmissions so that instructors could adjust their time-tables and select the items which they wanted their students to hear. Further help was also given by the British Broadcasting Corporation when arrangements were made for their education officers to visit military units and give advice to instructors on the best way of using the broadcasts. Where this was done the value of the broadcasts usually increased considerably. (Here it must be pointed out that the efforts of some window-dressing unit education officers to impress visiting British Broadcasting Corporation representatives were not always so successful

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as they believed. There was, for example, the unfortunate incident of one unit in B.A.O.R. The men were 'tough' soldiers who had fought their way from El Alamein to Italy and Normandy to Germany. When the British Broadcasting Corporation visitor arrived at the unit he was conducted to a room where a group of these men had been 'press-ganged', from some instruction on motor mechanics which they had been enjoying, to await one of the Forces Educational Broadcasts which was about to begin. It was a little embarrassing for the unit education officer when the talk was announced as one that had been exclusively designed for the Auxiliary Territorial Service and called "Problems of Motherhood".)

At first there is little doubt that the Forces Educational Broadcasts met with a mixed reception. The fact that units had received little notice of the first series of broadcasts meant that they got off to a bad start, and this was not helped by the fact that there were few instructors available who had had experience in handling broadcasts as a teaching aid. Then there were the inevitable complaints that some of the subjects were, for the majority of soldiers and auxiliaries, 'quite unconnected with reality'. But the most serious criticism of the broadcasts in the early stages was the simplest one — there were too few radio sets in units which could be used for instructional purposes.

It was not long before these growing pains were relieved. As the British Broadcasting Corporation gained experience, the programmes generally became more and more related to the needs of the Services as they were and not as they ought to have been. As the instructors gained experience in using this reinforcement to their teaching, so the British Broadcasting Corporation was able to give longer preliminary notice of the programmes. Much more important, within three months of the introduction of the broadcasts, it was possible for commands to report that, generally speaking, the supply of receivers exceeded the demand. One criticism,

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however, remained to the end. Units at home constantly complained that the second morning broadcast interfered with the time-honoured and unmoving N.A.A.F.I. break for tea and buns at 10.30 A.M. They forgot that the broadcasts had been primarily designed for troops in British Army of the Rhine * and that the times were convenient for these troops overseas.

The types of broadcasts themselves continued to meet with varying receptions. Some topics of the citizenship and current affairs had received favourable comment, but there was a fairly general complaint that subjects of an academic nature like the 'clear thinking' series were of much too high a standard. The methods of presenting programmes were also widely discussed. When the programmes were being planned the British Broadcasting Corporation was advised that 'straight' talks lasting twenty minutes would not be popular and were to be avoided. They were encouraged to use 'feature' programmes, dramatisations and all the tricks of broadcasting. This proved to have been an over-statement of the case, and experience showed that, while 'feature' programmes were usually well received, on some topics which concerned them directly the troops preferred to have a straight ungarnished recital of the facts. Even after three months' trial some commands reported that the broadcasts were not widely used, and that most of them were more suitable for individual than for group purposes. It was a comforting thought, however, that just over four months after the first Forces Educational Broadcast had been put on the air, there were 850 listening groups in home commands, 750 in the British Army of the Rhine and about 150 in the Central Mediterranean Force. At the date of their introduction the British Broadcasting Corporation estimated that one man out of every hundred was listening to one broadcast a day. Within three months the estimate was one in every fifty.

* The broadcasts were also transmitted to troops in the Central Mediterranean and Middle East theatres.

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These included auxiliaries and soldiers. Equally encouraging was a survey made by statistical experts of the British Broadcasting Corporation who revealed that more than three-quarters of a million civilians in Great Britain were regularly 'eaves-dropping' on the Forces Educational Broadcasts. There is no doubt that the Forces Educational Broadcasts provided not only direct help but also a general background to the Army Education Scheme. They were a means and method of getting across the personalities and ideas of experts in their various walks of life, and, at the same time, of kindling the listener's enthusiasm in a way which could not have been done by the instructor alone. Another valuable feature of the Forces Educational Broadcasts was that they provided the British Broadcasting Corporation with experience which was useful in planning the new series of cultural broadcasts to the British people as a whole which began in the autumn of 1946 as a new programme.

BOOKS, MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

For some time after the Army Education Scheme had been officially implemented, there was, as might have been expected, a considerable lag before the promised supplies of books, materials and equipment began to filter through to units. For a few months after July 1, 1945, this caused a great deal of dissatisfaction, but, as the promised books and other necessities began to reach units, the unfavourable criticisms about the non-arrival of educational stores began to change to favourable comments about their quality. This was particularly true of books. It is no exaggeration to say that the quality of the books issued as text-books and as constituents of unit and command libraries met with enthusiastic approval. Further, when the distribution of books had got fully under way, there were few complaints about the

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quantity of books available to units. By September 30, 1945, for example, every unit with approximately five hundred men on its establishment had received a selected unit library of 240 volumes; smaller and larger units were similarly supplied on a *pro rata* basis. Text-books and command library books were also being despatched in comparable quantities. At Christmas 1945 it was possible to say that the Army's demand for books had been well and truly met, and that, when it was impossible to supply books because of publishing and other difficulties, the public libraries came forward, as they had done throughout the War, to remedy deficiencies.

The equipment and materials for educational classes began to arrive in units later than books, but, by January 1946, it was possible to say that these, too, were flowing through in steady amounts. Apart from science equipment and handicraft materials, particularly leather, the other equipment and materials needed for the successful organisation of all the diverse educational activities that were going on in units and at formation headquarters were enough to meet reasonable demands. With one or two exceptions, there was little complaint about the quality of the materials, although some A.T.S., with a mistaken idea of the purpose for which the dress-making materials had been supplied, often lamented that the two and a half yards of material to which they were individually entitled, would not go far in supplying them with a new summer or winter outfit.

In discussing the supply of equipment and materials, it must not be thought that units were content to submit their indents to ordnance depots and then sit back to await delivery. In those units where education was considered to be of real importance, the units went foraging to salvage dumps, made contact with Royal Engineer and other arms of the Services who possessed stores which, however unserviceable to the Army, contained materials which could be used for educational purposes. 'Scrounging' and improvisa-

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tion were the order of the day and eked out the 'official'
supplies of materials.

BRITISH WAY AND PURPOSE AND A.B.C.A.

Of those aspects of education which were common to all units and which had been accepted as part of the war-time scheme of education, there is little doubt that these received a considerable fillip from the Release Period scheme of education. Most commands were agreed, for example, that the British Way and Purpose venture had been considerably improved by the introduction of the Army Education Scheme. The appointment of full-time unit education officers and instructors had made possible the supervision of all instruction and syllabuses covering periods of several weeks had been planned in relation to ascertained demands. The way in which the talks on good citizenship were taken varied from unit to unit, as did the particular aspects of citizenship which were considered. One anti-aircraft group, for example, through a group education committee, was in the habit of preparing its syllabus for some months ahead. After the War had ended the group education committee drew up a six-months syllabus in which the theme was "Aspects of British Life" and dealt with British institutions, traditions and characteristics. It also included sections on great men and women. Through this careful work and because of the zeal of the group, the series was particularly stimulating.

To help the unit instructors, briefing conferences were held at regular intervals. These were supported by courses for group discussion leaders organised either at army centres or by the regional committees at universities and other civilian educational centres. In many cases experts in local government were invited to talk to the soldiers and auxiliaries while frequently the latter saw local government in action by

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visiting council meetings, gas and electricity undertakings, waterworks and so on. Similar co-operation was made with central government experts and organised visits were made to law courts and other national institutions.

For a little while after the introduction of the Army Education Scheme, A.B.C.A. suffered a set-back. A widespread feeling developed that the education of the individual was the all-important issue and that education in community was of little use to the man who was prepared to study only for his own benefit. Gradually, however, A B C.A. regained its former place and when the pamphlet *War* gave place to another fortnightly *Current Affairs* pamphlet dealing exclusively with problems of resettlement in civilian life, the A B C.A. discussion periods gained added impetus.

Difficulties in keeping A.B.C.A. going were experienced, however, due mainly to the constant changes of officers owing to releases from the Army and to the general shortage of officers. This prevented much training of new officers in group discussion methods although district and sub-district courses were organised intermittently throughout the release period. The continuous A B.C.A. courses for regimental and commanding officers were continued at Coleg Harlech until February 1946, when that college reverted to its pre-war use as an adult education residential school for civilians. The A.B.C.A. training courses were then transferred to the Army School of Education, Eltham Palace (see p. 364).

Three further points about A.B.C.A. Suggestions concerned with *Map Review* showed that this popular feature had by no means lost its usefulness with the cessation of hostilities and suggested that the treatment of more and more subjects by visual methods might be attempted. Information rooms, too, did not lose their interest with the ending of the War. Instead, they were readjusted to meet changed conditions and now covered largely the problems of release, resettlement and other home interests. The third point was that dramatisation of current affairs topics had not developed

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in units as had been expected. In general it appeared that units were of the opinion that the dramatic form of presentation was only possible where there was an expert team like the A.B.C.A. Play Unit (see p. 171). This opinion, although widely prevalent, was not borne out by the experience of those units where dramatisation was being successfully applied by men and women with no professional acting experience. Here it seemed that energetic leadership made use of the talent available.

The introduction of the Army Education Scheme (Release Period) in July 1945 did not mean the cessation of educational activities which had been going on during the War. Usually, those units which had had a flourishing war-time scheme were the ones which developed the Army Education Scheme more quickly and efficiently. In those working and training units where it was found impossible to implement the Army Education Scheme it was decided by the War Office that the war-time scheme of education should be continued, that is, two periods a week were to be devoted in training or working time to British Way and Purpose and Army Bureau of Current Affairs and as many voluntary activities as possible were to be encouraged in the men's spare time. In units where the Army Education Scheme was being carried out, and in units where it was not, it was significant that voluntary pursuits of various kinds ranging from french polishing to music, art and drama increased both in quantity and in quality. Nor must the work that was being done in special types of army units be forgotten. In hospitals and convalescent depots, for example, work which has already been outlined (see p. 128) continued to grow, although much depended on the availability of materials and the skill of the instructors. Information rooms and 'corners' were to be found in most hospitals, and these were largely devoted to exhibits relating to release and resettlement. Valuable help on these matters was obtained from the Ministry of Labour

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rehabilitation and resettlement officials who regularly visited hospitals to advise patients who were due for discharge from the Army about their prospects of employment.

Educational programmes were also continued in detention barracks and military prisons (see p. 277). A number of periods a day were set aside in which the soldiers under sentence took part in group discussions, visited the information room or did individual work. In some cases extra time was also allotted to them for work in which they were specially interested. Besides A.B.C.A. and British Way and Purpose there were invariably frequent daily broadcasts of news, orchestral music and other items. Where soldiers under sentence had begun classes under the Army Education Scheme before committal, they were encouraged to continue with the work. Efforts to develop the Army Education Scheme among the permanent staff were not very successful because of the great shortage of personnel.

With contingents of Allied troops, mainly Czechs, Poles and Belgians, continuous educational work was done, but this was mainly confined to the teaching of English. At first the instructors were usually drawn from the Army Educational Corps but some of these Allied soldiers acquired remarkable proficiency in English and, in time, took over the teaching of their comrades.

This, then, was the general state of Army Education some six months after the official implementation of the Army Education Scheme on July 1, 1945. But, in addition to all that was going on in units at home and overseas and of which a general picture has been given, two developments of major importance had occurred. The first was the setting-up of a new Army School of Education at Eltham in Kent and the other the growth of the Formation Colleges already referred to (see p. 332). These will now be considered.

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THE ARMY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, ELTHAM PALACE

An important development in army education took place in September 1945, when a group of officers assembled at Eltham Palace for a short course at this new Army School of Education. Eltham Palace dates far back into history — the moat and its walls were sited and built by a Bishop of Durham, Anthony Bek, in 1300 and the stone bridge over the moat was built in 1396 by command of Richard II. In the reign of Edward IV, the Great Hall, with its superb hammer-beam roof, was built and, since 1479, this building has stood, despite ravages inflicted during the Parliamentary Wars, as a testament to medieval architects.

Until 1911 this Hall, which had embraced so many monarchs of England, became little more than a rallying point for painters and historians. In that year some repairs were made by the Ancient Monuments Department of the Government, but its new lease of life did not begin until twenty-two years later. In 1933 the lease was given by the Crown to Mr. Stephen Courtauld; the main condition of restoration was that, when it took place, any new buildings were not to conflict with the dignity and harmony of the Great Hall. In the next three years the Hall was restored, new wings were added for living accommodation, decrepit and extraneous dwellings which had encroached upon the estate were pulled down and the grounds and gardens were made into places of serene beauty. In 1944 Mr. Courtauld generously returned the lease to the Crown, stipulating only that Eltham Palace should be used for a cause worthy of it.

That cause was army education. For not only was Eltham Palace to become an Army School of Education; it was, as Lord Nathan, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War, declared at the official opening ceremony on October 25, 1945, "to become the permanent peace-time home of the Army Educational Corps". To those who

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believed in the value of residential education and that the main cultural impact on adults is social rather than strictly educational, the choice of this historical setting, with its rich associations, as the future home of the Army Educational Corps represented a dream come true. The first commandant of the School was Lieut.-Colonel W. S. Beddall, who did much towards establishing the School. Beddall was succeeded in October 1946 by Lieut.-Colonel E. E. Lowe, whose academic qualifications and experiences rendered him a most apt choice.

At first the School was used to provide short conferences for officers of the Army Educational Corps during which they could share experiences and discuss the difficulties which they were meeting in operating the Army Education Scheme in the field. Most of these officers were drawn in from home commands, but occasionally they were joined by officers from overseas theatres of war. Lest these Army Educational Corps officers tended to concentrate too severely on the supervisory and administrative difficulties of their work, they were joined by unit education officers, who were concerned with the fine details of the scheme in the units themselves, and by commanding officers, who were responsible for seeing that opportunities and good facilities for education were provided in the units under their command. This interchange of ideas, between those who were concerned with running the scheme on the ground and those who had helped to plan the broad principles, as well as the general details of administration, was of real service to those soldiers and auxiliaries for whom the scheme had been planned.

The School was also used for providing new recruits to the Army Educational Corps. A scheme which aimed at providing educational facilities for at least six hours weekly to some four to five million adults could not be carried out without a large administrative and organising staff. In anticipation of the Army Education Scheme there had been a great expansion of the Army Educational Corps; but, apart

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from 'expected wastages through demobilisation, the number of officers in the Army Educational Corps when the Army Education Scheme was introduced was still markedly inadequate. Fortunately, the number of candidates who wished to transfer to the Corps was high, and another of the duties of the new School of Education was to provide courses whereby suitable applicants could be assessed as to their suitability for transfer. This was done by testing their ability for organising and in instructional technique, by their contributions to discussions and the work of the School as a whole, and, above all, by their force of personality and powers of leadership. Once more the interplay of ideas between those to be transferred and those already experienced in army education in the field was of considerable value to both groups.

Even then the functions of the School were not exhausted. In some theatres of war, particularly India, some Army Educational Corps personnel, who had been overseas for long periods, had been primarily concerned with the teaching of English to Indians and of Urdu to British soldiers. They had had little opportunity of finding out the tremendous developments in army education during the later years of the War. When they came home many of these individuals felt an urgent need for 'refresher' courses where they might be brought up to date with the latest developments in army education. For them Eltham Palace also made provision.

Some of the time at Eltham Palace was spent in considering the carry-over of good features in army education to the national educational system. This will be described in later chapters, but, at this stage, it is worth noting that the Ministry of Education was fully aware of the need for capitalising the newly gained interest in particular aspects of education by soldiers and auxiliaries during the War. Accordingly, two short courses for groups of His Majesty's inspectors were held at Eltham Palace. There they were introduced to the main principles of the Army Education Scheme and, later, visited units at home and overseas

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(B.A.O.R., C.M.F. and M.E.F.) to see how effectively army education was working in the field. When these visits were over, some of which were to last three months, it was proposed to bring the inspectors together again at Eltham Palace where their recommendations could be collated and transmitted to the Ministry for any action which was thought desirable.

FORMATION COLLEGES

As we have seen (p 332), at "the apex of the Army Education Scheme" were to be special residential educational institutions known as formation colleges. The problem of finding suitable sites for these colleges, which were to take anything between six hundred and a thousand students at a time, was considerable. By the end of September 1945, however, five colleges had begun to function in home commands and one each in Central Mediterranean Force and in Middle East Force. Added difficulty was experienced in finding suitable premises for the formation college in north-west Europe, but this, too, was ready to receive its first influx of students in November 1945. The only college which was established in premises which had previously been used for adult education was one in Scottish Command which was set up at Newbattle Abbey, Dalkeith. Thus, apart from the task of finding the site itself, there was the added problem of carrying through the necessary structural alterations and works services which would provide the formation colleges with an atmosphere which would be conducive to study.

At home, besides Newbattle Abbey, two colleges were opened at places where the main building was an old English country house. One was at Welbeck Abbey, near Worksop, which took students from Northern Command, and the other was at Luton Hoo (now closed), providing for soldiers and auxiliaries from Eastern Command. The one in Western

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Command was at Stourport-on-Severn and consisted of buildings which had been put up as a United States Army military hospital. This college also took students from Anti-Aircraft Command. Probably the worst college from the accommodation point of view was the one at Chisledon in Wiltshire, providing for troops from Southern Command and London District. This consisted of what had formerly been a hutted camp.

In Italy the University of Perugia was used as the formation college for the Central Mediterranean Force, while in Middle East Force the College was scattered between Cairo and Jerusalem. Different departments were set up in Cairo, Alexandria, Mount Carmel and Sarafand, the work as a whole being co-ordinated in Cairo. In Germany, the college of the Rhine was established in part of the University of Gottingen, although one or two departments were set up in other cities; the agricultural wing, for example, was first established in Brussels.

So much for the buildings themselves. What of the human material that went into the Colleges and how did it respond? This, perhaps, may best be described by considering the activities that were going on in one of the formation colleges.

The first thing that would strike any visitor to a formation college was the complete absence of formality. The aim of each college was to create an atmosphere as closely as possible resembling that of a university. All parades were, therefore, abolished. Saluting remained as a mark of respect and courtesy between all ranks, but that was the only formality of army discipline which was retained. In classes and discussions there was no distinction of rank or sex. All mixed together freely to work out the problems in which they were interested. If a man missed a class because he thought he might be better employed in private study, no questions were asked. If he missed too many he was usually asked to explain the reason why. It was gratifying to learn

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that the freedom allowed was seldom abused. A fairly typical cross-section of the students to be found on any one course may be illustrated by the following figures taken from a course in session at Luton Hoo in December 1945. Altogether there were fifty-seven male officers and 452 other ranks, while among the women there were two A.T.S. officers and ninety-four other ranks. The small number of officers attending was due to the severe shortage of officers, and especially A.T.S. officers, for normal military duties in their units. Many officers were upset because they could not be spared to attend formation colleges, and later arrangements were made whereby they and other ranks were allowed to go during their release leave.

The only thing expected of the students during their four weeks' stay at the formation college was that they should get on with their work. And, as one journalist put it,

they certainly do work with a will. Visit the library at night. Midnight is striking, but you will still find the room lighted, still find men and women sitting at little writing-tables making notes, turning up references or working at essays. As likely as not you will find lights on, too, in the arts and crafts department where students, long after formal instruction hours have ceased, go on working on their pieces of sculpture, sketches or painting. In fact, in the words of the instructors, "You can't get these fellows to stop work. They regard every moment of their time as precious."¹

In the normal way the Colleges were not designed to give elementary instruction and students accepted were assumed to have previous knowledge of the subject which they wished to study. The experience of instructors was that men and women who applied for courses did so because they were anxious to fit or re-equip themselves for jobs. The colleges did all they could to help in this respect, but the declared and practical aim went beyond this immediate economic need. An effort was also made to help in equipping students for the broader task of becoming thoughtful students in a

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democracy which was undergoing the pains and difficulties of rebuilding itself after six years of war.

An idea of the variety of studies which were pursued may be illustrated by an analysis of the course at Luton Hpo which has been mentioned previously. Of the 605 students in residence, eighty-nine were taking 'modern studies' (embracing subjects like English, history, geography, government, French, German and Russian); 117 were taking commerce, seventy-nine science, 123 were equipping themselves in various trades, ninety-seven were taking arts and crafts and forty-eight domestic science. Fifteen former Post Office employees were refreshing their knowledge of telephone installation and wiring, and thirty-seven other students were training as educational instructors.

Enrolment was, of course, both voluntary and free. Applications were made through the individual's unit, and one of the biggest problems of those in charge of the colleges was their utter inability to cope with the number of applications received. On each of the earlier courses there were usually four or five applicants for each vacancy that could be allotted. Accommodation was increased, but even then there were considerably more applicants than places. Equipment, too, was very inadequate for some of the classes, particularly science, at the colleges and showed that army education, no less than civilian, was suffering from a world-wide shortage of educational equipment. Yet, despite the shortages, despite the extemporary way in which some of the classes had to be arranged, something was achieved at these formation colleges, which were often attended by students who had never previously attended a residential educational course, that inspired those in charge to greater efforts and which gave them renewed faith in the efficacy of adult education. No one pretended that elementary students could get more than an introduction to a subject in a course which lasted only one month. No one pretended that four weeks' reading and lectures were sufficient to bring the

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solicitor in uniform up to date with advances in his profession during the war years. What was certain was that these formation colleges provided the first opportunity a man or woman in the Army had had for a long time of being himself or herself. And, in doing that, they usually opened up new interests and gave back faith in themselves to thousands of soldiers and auxiliaries.

REFERENCE

1. "Luton Hoo . University for all Ranks ", by Martin Chisholm, *Picture Post* (January 12, 1946).

PART FOUR

ARMY EDUCATION AND THE
NATIONAL SYSTEM

Chapter Twenty-Two

Discussion Groups

IN the White Paper on "Educational Reconstruction" which was presented by the President of the Board of Education (now Minister of Education) to the House of Commons in 1943, the section on adult education contains the following clauses :

Without provision for adult education the national system must be incomplete, and it has been well said that the measure of the effectiveness of earlier education is the extent to which in some form or other it is continued voluntarily in later life. It is only when the pupil or student reaches maturer years that he will have served an apprenticeship in the affairs of life sufficient to enable him fully to fit himself for service to the community. It is thus within the wider sphere of adult education that an ultimate training in democratic citizenship must be sought.¹

After this introduction, which emphasised the importance of adult education to a democratic people, the White Paper went on to consider the means whereby adult education could be promoted :

A start will have been made by the extension of secondary education and by continued part-time education. By these means increased educational interest in later years should be stimulated. More immediately, the education services that have operated in the Forces, and the interest in enquiry and discussion developed by the Army Bureau of Current Affairs . . . are likely to produce a much larger public anxious to pursue a variety of subjects on informal lines.

With this tribute to the educational programmes which, even by the middle of 1943, had been built up in the Forces,

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the White Paper outlined the policy which the President hoped to recommend to Parliament in his Education Bill.

While the more serious and solid studies that have formed the backbone of adult education at its best in the past must be maintained [it was stated], there will be room for new methods and new approaches to meet new demands. In particular, there will need to be developed appropriate centres, including a number of residential colleges, which will not only provide the educational courses which the adult population may need, but will add to them the values associated with the life of a corporate institution.

This policy was discussed by local education authorities and voluntary organisations for adult education, and, in 1944, it was incorporated into the Education Act. Until this time, local education authorities had had the permissive power to develop adult education within their areas. With the passing of the Act the option became a mandate, and, as it was put by the President of the Board of Education when introducing the Bill, "The present power of local education authorities to aid the supply of higher education is converted into a duty to provide adequate facilities for . . . general adult education".² After consultation with the universities and educational associations, the authorities were required to submit schemes to the Minister, which, if approved, they would then be required to translate into practice.

From the foregoing three principles emerge With the passing of the Education Act of 1944 there was to be considerable extension of adult education in Britain. This was to be effected by the local education authorities (who were to play a much stronger part than they had hitherto done), the universities and the voluntary organisations, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education. Thirdly, the educational schemes in the Forces had obtained recognition, and were recommended as examples of the new methods and new approaches which would need to be used to meet potential new demands.

What, therefore, had army education produced which

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could be recommended as practicable guides to the authorities which had been charged with the development of an extended scheme of adult education throughout the country? Before we consider the question, it is necessary briefly to examine the position of adult education for the civilian population in the country at the outbreak and end of the War.

This has been well summarised by a committee which was set up by the British Institute of Adult Education in the autumn of 1942 and which performed a valuable service to adult education by presenting a report to the Board of Education in the early part of 1943, when the White Paper on the reconstruction of education was being drafted. The committee was composed of men and women with wide experience in the adult education movement. Their assessment of the state of adult education in Britain provides ample evidence of the width of that experience and must be regarded with respect.³

First, they paid tribute to all that had been achieved by local education authorities and organisations of national repute like the Adult School movement, the Mechanics Institutes, the University Extension movement, the Workers' Educational Association, Educational Settlements, Women's Institutes, Townswomen's Guilds and the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. Despite all that had been done, however, it was still true to say that the vast majority of the adult population had as yet been unattracted by any of these movements which, on the whole, had been preaching to the converted. Moreover, a factor which greatly limited the appeal of education in adult life was that too little regard had been paid to the variety of human interests. Too often both subjects and methods had been based in great measure on the assumption that the adult community as a whole had, or ought to have, the same interests and aptitudes as university students. Further, extension of interest in adult education in the past had been hindered by the somewhat rigid line which had been drawn

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between vocational and non-vocational subjects. This had been accompanied by a similarly unnatural classification of non-vocational subjects into a narrow hierarchy in which economics, political science and industrial history had been given the better seats while music, the arts, literature and other subjects had lesser seats or none at all.

All this was put in another way by the Master of Balliol College, Oxford, when he said that "the work of voluntary organisations in Adult Education is, if they are left to themselves, always patchy and uneven and ill-distributed".⁴ After forty years of existence in which it had been warmly supported by the Board of Education, the universities, local education authorities and many working-class organisations, the Workers' Educational Association still attracted less than seventy thousand students annually. "All told," wrote Mr. H. C. Dent, the editor of *The Times Educational Supplement*, "the facilities for leisure-time education provided out of the public purse do not attract more than half a million adults (including all those pursuing practical studies at technical institutions) out of a total population of more than twenty millions."⁵

From the foregoing it may be seen that adult education in Britain had not made the progress which some people had hoped for by the time the Second World War broke out. Consequently there were many, both in an official and unofficial capacity, who were anxious for a new approach to the vital issue of the education of the adult. It would be less than just, however, if nothing were said about the progress that was made in the general field of adult education among the civilian population during the Second World War. As in the Armed Forces, considerable developments took place which could only be attributed to the facts that war makes many people find themselves for the first time and that money was spent much more freely and readily on educational matters than had hitherto been the case.

There was, for example, the fine work done by the

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Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (C.E.M.A.). This organisation had been set up to do what its name indicated and had been supported by State grants. It was so successful, especially in bringing music and the arts to the civilian population, that, when the War ended, it was given a new name — the Arts Council of Great Britain (A.C.G.B.), and a new lease of life by a generous subsidy from the Ministry of Education.

Since 1935, the British Institute of Adult Education had organised exhibitions in pictorial art under the general heading of "Art for the People". During the War this scheme was considerably extended, and exhibitions were held in town halls, museums, art galleries, public libraries, schools, women's institutes, village halls and other places. The scheme probably reached its peak when the British Institute of Adult Education persuaded many local authorities to include their exhibitions in British restaurants. (These were a war-time development sponsored by local authorities to provide workers with the cheapest possible meals in congenial surroundings) In some cases the exhibitions led to a marked interest in art and initiated many promising activities.

In the world of music there was, beside the work done by C.E.M.A., that which was fostered by the Municipal Education Committee of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. The purpose of this Committee was "to create and foster an interest in amateur music-making, both choral and orchestral, by adults". It operated mainly through the local education authorities and the voluntary organisations and produced some remarkable results not only in developing music appreciation classes but in the making of music by adults. This Musical Education Committee was chiefly interested in rural areas, as was another organisation called the Rural Music Schools Council. The Rural Music Schools movement did some valuable work in the six counties where its committees existed. Nor, in speaking of music, must

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one omit the fine contributions made by Dame Myra Hess as the organiser of the popular lunch-time concerts held at the National Gallery, London. Above all, there was the contribution made by the British Broadcasting Corporation. The Corporation, with a well-concealed but skilful policy for providing good music, did more than any other agency to promote and maintain interest in music.

The practice of dramatic activities by amateurs had been increasing in popularity before 1939 and, during the War, the number of amateur societies which produced their own plays grew apace. C.E.M.A. and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust did much to extend this growth, as did the British Drama League, and the National Federation of Women's Institutes. As a subsidiary to drama a large number of play-reading groups grew larger because of the facilities for borrowing plays which were offered by the British Drama League.

Nor must it be thought that the growth of discussion groups and classes on current affairs was confined to the Armed Forces. Largely owing to the inspiring leadership of Stephen Spender and the able support of the Workers' Educational Association, many hundreds of discussion groups were organised in the Civil Defence Services, particularly in National Fire Service groups in London and Lancashire.⁶ Discussion groups were also organised in certain industrial undertakings, but, with one or two notable exceptions, these did not survive very long.

Above all, the work of many of those organisations which had made substantial contributions to adult education before the Second World War was often considerably extended during 1939-45. Some Workers' Educational Association Branches, for example, reported that the number of students they enrolled in 1945 was double the number of members in 1938. Other organisations like the University Extension movement, the Educational Settlements Association, the Rural Community Council (whose work was co-ordinated on

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a national basis by the National Council of Social Service), women's institutes, townswomen's guilds, young farmers' clubs, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations, all reported new interest and new enthusiasm for the activities they sponsored.

Yet, after paying tribute to the work of the adult education organisations, one was still reminded that, as the British Institute of Adult Education Committee put it, "perhaps the most remarkable venture into the field of adult education is to be seen in connexion with the armed forces", an opinion which, as we have seen, was shared by the Ministry of Education. It is necessary, therefore, to make a critical analysis of army education to see what it contained of real worth which could practicably be transferred to the national system of education.

Before this assessment is made, it is necessary to stress one factor which is of the greatest importance if interests which have been awakened in the Army are to be maintained in civilian life. That is the factor of urgency. For a while after their discharge there is every reason to believe that Service men and women will undergo the inevitable period of reaction and will wish to avoid any pursuits which will make them submit to any kind of discipline whether social or intellectual. Then will come the counter-reaction, and there will be a demand for educational facilities which have been available in the Army. Unless those facilities are forthcoming, it is almost certain that the opportunity of increasing the number of recruits to adult education will not be so favourable for a long time to come. It is with this dominating sense of urgency that we make this critical appraisal of army education.

In general, education in the Army during the Second World War had accomplished three things. A few soldiers and auxiliaries had been made aware of the need for universal adult education. Secondly, in many a sense of that need had been awakened while in others a keen desire for education

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had been created or re-kindled. Thirdly (and the former deductions are the outcome of this), army education unquestionably did much to popularise and something to improve methods and techniques in the presentation of adult education.

This concentration on the need for persuasive presentation had been taken up as a direct challenge to those who believed that adult education was simply an expression of the people's will to learn ; the success of new methods had vindicated their introduction and offered a new approach for the future.

Further, there were many observers, of whom Sir Robert Wood, the deputy secretary to the Ministry of Education, was one, who believed that any extension of the more solid forms of education for adults in the shape of tutorial classes and one-year courses is, for at least the immediate future, likely to be quite limited. Before the War the more formal classes appeared to have reached a limit and any increase in numbers had been largely in the less-exacting type of shorter courses. " At any rate . . . ", wrote Sir Robert, " I should myself incline to the view that the restlessness of mind that may be expected to follow war will tend to discourage folk from embarking on the more serious and continuous forms of purely cultural studies." 7

In more specific terms, what particular features of army education might profitably be incorporated into the adult education movement as part of the British educational system ? Much more important, what proposals could be offered of practical value to indicate how these features could become part of the national educational movement ?

First, undoubtedly, was the development of the discussion group as a means of encouraging all types of men and women of varying levels of intelligence and experiences to take an active interest in the affairs of their local communities, their country and of the world. The success of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs method was its spread far beyond the

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strict confines of army education into the hitherto exclusive field of military training. This itself was a noteworthy achievement and helped to establish a more intimate and understanding relationship between officer and man than had existed hitherto.

For its success we must look more closely at the method itself. It contained nothing new and was, in fact, as old as the hills. But the Army realised that it contained a technique which must be thought out and which, to be most effective, should be studied and practised by discussion group leaders. At Coleg Harlech and the many A.B.C.A. courses that were held throughout the country, detailed attention was given to these questions until eventually a considerable number of soldiers had learned the most useful ways of stimulating and controlling discussion. When backed by adequate background information, this practice of carefully thought-out technique achieved results far out-stripping those of discussion group leaders who were mines of information but had little regard for the method of presenting their information.

So much for presentation. What of the Army's discussion groups on current affairs? Is there a place for them in civil life? And, if so, how can they best be introduced? It has been suggested by some enthusiasts that, like A.B.C.A. in the Army, discussion groups should become a compulsory part of adult education and that industry should be called upon to provide facilities, and allow time off, for non-vocational education, including discussion groups. Even if one accepted this principle of compulsion — and most people recognise that the nearest we may get to true freedom may always have to be conditioned by some degree of compulsion — it need not take long to dispose of this suggestion as being quite unlikely to be acceptable either to employers or to employees. The experience of the Industrial Bureau of Current Affairs, after praiseworthy attempts to promote discussion groups in the firm's time in

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various industries, was that most firms were not yet ready for such a measure. This, unquestionably, would be the attitude of the majority of industries today if efforts were made to introduce non-vocational education in the middle of important periods of production. The link between one and the other has not yet been grasped. The majority of employees, too, would invariably be suspicious of something which was new and which had been imposed from above. Civilians are not accustomed to the compulsion which necessarily governs the whole life of the soldier, and their suspicions of a 'laid-on' current-affairs venture would be even greater than that of the soldier when A.B.C.A. was first presented. Anything which was prescribed for them with the collusion of the 'bosses' and managers would generally be looked upon suspiciously as an attempt to determine the way their thinking should go and hence the way they should act.

For the immediate present, therefore, the introduction of discussion groups on a compulsory basis into industry would seem to have little chance of success. The policy likely to produce the surest results would be the time-honoured one in various adult education movements — gentle persuasion, rather than compulsion. If some industrial undertakings can be persuaded to follow the example of the one or two firms that have already permitted non-vocational classes to be introduced during the firm's time, we can but hope that the effects on the employees will encourage still more firms to take up the idea. If a few large-scale industrial firms can be persuaded to introduce non-vocational classes into working time, it might well spread until it became a regular and consolidated part of industrial life. For the present it is well to admit that the introduction of general education classes for young workers under the County College scheme will be as far as — and further than — the majority of industrial undertakings are prepared to go.

Where, then, will be the immediate opportunities for

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developing discussion groups on current affairs in civilian life? Invariably the major part of this work will have to be sponsored by already-existing organisations like the Workers' Educational Association, the Rural Community Council, the Educational Settlements Association, the Women's Institutes and Townswomen's Guilds, the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. They themselves may have to re-orientate some of their work to meet these new demands, but the strength of these organisations is such that that should present opportunities rather than difficulties.

But, even when these organisations have orientated their work to meet new demands in a new way, the vast majority of adults will still remain outside the educational fold. What can we do for them?

Here, we believe, educationists should take men and women where they are found and not where they ought to be found. When the new community centres begin to function it should not be difficult to arrange discussion groups as an integral part of their programmes and, as many think, the means of enlisting new members for other non-vocational classes in the centres. With a few notable exceptions, however, the community centres are unlikely to flourish for at least a few years and, in the meantime, something ought to be done for the demand which the Forces have created.

We believe that what can be done will only be done by the organisation of discussion groups in places where men and women were wont to meet before the War, where they have been meeting during the War, and where they are likely to go on meeting after the War. In mining centres, for example, where a demand for "something like A.B.C.A." has already been expressed to the authorities by demobilised soldiers, much could be done by enterprising leaders in the miners' welfare clubs and institutes. In some public-houses the spate of unorganised argument has been transformed into organised discussion by a few enthusiasts. The churches offer fruitful ground for the development of groups anxious

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to discuss the inter-relations of religious and secular issues, and a recent report indicates that at least one denomination is anxious to promote adult education in its broadest conception. Then there are also the co-operative guilds, radio listening groups, cadet forces, sports clubs and fellowship associations, all of which have the common characteristic that they meet regularly in manageable numbers. It is in these and other places, where men and women gather together in small communities, that we must seek new recruits to adult education.

Like the Army Bureau of Current Affairs and its place in army education, one of the best means of catching initial interest will be through informal discussion groups; which brings us to the main issue. Who is to undertake the organisation of these discussion groups? Who is to be responsible for their organisation and for keeping them going long enough to get them well established? Again we turn to the voluntary organisations connected with adult education in one way or another. Where necessary, their activities should be extended to provide for men and women whose interests and educational attainments preclude them from attendance at classes of a tutorial nature.

But, even if the scope of the voluntary organisations is extended, much more will need to be done before real effort to stimulate the formation of discussion groups on a national basis can be said to have been attempted. Here there will be incalculable opportunities for the further education departments of local education authorities. In the same way that youth organisers have inspired and co-ordinated the formation of youth clubs, so organisers for further education should be given considerable freedom to develop the discussion group movement among adults of all ages. They should be men and women with a pioneering spirit and should be backed by education committees who would encourage them to undertake experimental work in the education of adults. If these pioneers can be appointed, and evidence from the

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Forces suggests that many discharged Service men and women are only too anxious to be given the opportunity to act as crusaders in this field of informal adult education, and if they link up with voluntary workers possessing the same spirit as themselves, Britain might see a remarkable up-raising of the quality of the people which would greatly add to its right to be called a democracy.

The selection and appointment of leaders, however, will not be enough. Accommodation problems will be acute and can only be solved on a local basis by the inspiration and determination of the leaders and the co-operation of local organisations. One great problem will still remain — how to keep discussion groups going after they have lost the fine careless rapture which accompanied their birth. The leaders will need skill in handling their groups and a steady flow of topical subject matter which will keep the groups alive. Here the enterprising director of A.B.C.A., Mr. W. E. Williams, has anticipated the need and it came as no surprise, in January 1946, to learn that a civilian Bureau of Current Affairs had been established.

The Bureau was set up by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust and is modelled on the same lines as the Army Bureau of Current Affairs. That is, the new organisation is not a promoting but a provisioning body. It does not seek to establish discussion groups — that it leaves to voluntary organisations, church associations, retail houses, industries, local education authorities and others — but includes among its functions that of advising any association on the way to set about creating new groups. Help to leaders is afforded by the issue of bulletins similar to those provided by A.B.C.A. at not less than fortnightly intervals. These contain a balanced assembly of facts on current events and guidance to the group on how to weigh those facts up before presenting them.

Another service which the new Bureau is providing is the regular issue of the visual aids which meant so much in

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the successful organisation of information rooms and current affairs corners in army units. What was done in military camps and messes can also be done in the factory, the workshop, the pit-head canteen and the sixth-form room, and the Bureau is providing photographic exhibitions on a large range of subjects and a weekly or fortnightly Current Affairs Map Review. These aids the Bureau will supplement with film strips, as well as films bearing upon the subject matter of its bulletins.

Although the new Bureau cannot take on the organisation of discussion groups in the field, it recognises that the war-time promotion of discussion groups has shown the necessity to give group leaders some basic training in the art of chairmanship. Concentrated courses have produced impressive results, and it is the Bureau's intention to provide facilities of a similar kind. At first, week-end schools are to be arranged, but, later, it is hoped the Bureau will have a full-time training school with its own resident staff of 'method' instructors and demonstrators — its own Coleg Harlech.

That the Carnegie United Kingdom Trustees were determined that this new venture should be given every chance to succeed was indicated by the amount placed at the disposal of the Bureau on its initiation, that is, £250,000. Eventually the Trustees intend that the Bureau shall become an independent self-supporting organisation under the control of its own governing body. To begin with, however, a provisional committee was constituted, composed partly of some of the Trustees and partly of other persons with expert knowledge of adult education. It was not insignificant that the first two appointments made ensured that all the experience gained in the Army Bureau of Current Affairs would be used to develop the new bureau. The first chairman of the provisional committee was Mr. P. R. (now Sir Philip) Morris, former director-general of army education and now vice-chancellor of the University of Bristol; the director of the new Bureau is Mr. W. E. Williams, who had been responsible

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for the birth and bringing-up of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs.

Compared with the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, the new Bureau has certain advantages. It has a freedom which no Government department could dare to entrust to the editors and authors of its discussion-briefs. It can select subjects for discussion which could not be sponsored by a department like the War Office. The fact that it is a popular instrument of education governed not by a ministry but by the spokesmen and representatives of the consumer-interest will diminish the suspicions and 'sales-resistance' which A.B.C.A. often encountered.

There are disadvantages, however, which the new Bureau will have to face. These were clearly fore-shadowed by the man who had been so instrumental in persuading the army authorities to experiment with A.B.C.A.

In the strict sense of the word [wrote Sir Ronald Adam] A.B.C.A. in the Army has been a "parade", for, although conducted in the most informal setting and atmosphere which the Army can provide, attendance has been compulsory. Whether the new Bureau can instigate a similar volume of attendance on a voluntary basis remains to be seen. However much the discussion-group idea has caught on, there is immense scope for missionary zeal in spreading the good habit of community discussion, and equal scope for transforming sociable small-talk into creative public opinion.⁸

Without this evangelising spirit, the development of the discussion group movement among the civilian population would be of little quantitative or qualitative value.

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Chapter Twenty-Three

Information Rooms and Education Centres

INFORMATION ROOMS

ANOTHER feature of army education which, while not new, had been considerably developed, was the use of information rooms as a means of stimulating interest in current affairs by displaying pictorial exhibitions, photographs and other visual appeals (see p. 169). These varied considerably from unit to unit. In the early days of the Second World War little attention was paid to them. Then, encouraged by the Army Bureau of Current Affairs, one or two individuals began to see the possibilities in these information rooms until, eventually, they became recognised features of most static and many operational units (see p. 170). In some cases they became the focus of educational activities in the unit, and, when the persons responsible possessed the true missionary spirit, grew until they became not only information rooms but also community centres.¹ These information rooms had many advantages over other informal methods in provoking the interests of men and women in topical events. They were always available. They were not obtrusive. They could blend 'education' and 'entertainment' so skilfully that the recipient was led easily from one to the other and back again. Their appeal was to the eye, and the initial response was often immediate because it demanded little effort. Through the use of arresting colours and the tasteful display of exhibitions and photographs, many men and women found their attention had been captured and held in spite of their innate resistance to anything even remotely

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connected with education. For these, and other reasons, it is evident that information rooms and corners offer a method in the informal education of adults which needs to be taken up in civilian life.

How can this be done? Much of what has already been said about the organisation of discussion groups will also apply to the setting-up of information rooms. Because of the facilities which can be provided by the Bureau of Current Affairs, the establishment of information rooms throughout the country should not be difficult. To be successful, however, they must be attractive and, from the beginning, it should be impressed on those responsible for establishing and maintaining them that the pinning-up of a pictorial exhibition in a room will not make an information room. Some of the material used will have to be local and topical. All of it will have to be displayed tastefully and changed frequently. And as many people as possible should be encouraged to take an interest in the scheme and take an active share in the running of it.

A point which the Army accepted after some years of experience with information rooms was that the all-important point was its location. Wherever possible, they were to be found in places which troops could not easily avoid — next to the N.A.A.F I., in the corner of the dining-room, as part of the library and so on.

In the civilian world the organisations and societies which we have suggested might be encouraged to develop the discussion group movement would also be the main channels for promoting a flow of information rooms. One may also expect active co-operation within industry and many firms will need little persuasion to convince them of the value of information rooms. Wherever they are set up, in mills, pit-head canteens, schools, settlements, clubs, churches, public-houses — one public-house in Yorkshire had the rudiments of an inspiring information room long before they were developed in the Army — village halls or community

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centres, those responsible should insist that the rooms are on the beaten track and that a steady flow of material illustrating local, national and international affairs will always be available. Moreover, those in charge of information rooms will need a co-operative spirit and untiring devotion to the task of educating adults which has already been described as being essential to leaders of discussion groups

ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES

In considering the carry-over to civilian life of educational experiments which have been popular in the Army, it has been insisted that they will best flourish where people are wont to go rather than where more serious-minded individuals consider they ought to go. Nevertheless, attempts should be made to provide suitable establishments which will be attractive enough to make men and women want to explore the activities that take place within them. Here the army education centres (see p. 217) provide models which could well be copied in civilian life. Their aim can be stated by quoting some remarks taken from a report presented by the Adult Education Advisory Committee of the Kent County Council. "An Adult Education Centre", the report reads, "starts with educational activities and, by developing other activities, incidentally builds up a social life of its own." Several of the best army education centres were established in Kent and often were successful because of the help given by the local education authority. No doubt the purpose of an adult education centre as defined by the Advisory Committee was not unconnected with observations made in the army education centres by its representatives. It should also be made clear that the non-residential settlements of the Educational Settlements Association are very similar in conception and functions to the army education centres. In one of their recent pamphlets called *Citizen Centres for Adult*

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Education they have put forward a moving plea for the development of these centres on a large scale throughout the country. This suggestion has also been supported by the Workers' Educational Association in one of their bulletins called *Colleges and Local Centres for Adult Education*.

Since the building of new premises will be out of the question for some years, to establish these adult education centres, local education authorities, in conjunction with the voluntary organisations, could adopt the army principle of taking over some of the larger houses — which are often unsuitable for converting into flats — and through full-time or part-time wardens, seek to establish centres on parallel lines to those which did successful work for the troops at Dover, Salisbury and other places during the War.

Nor would the conversion of large houses be necessarily a temporary expedient in the setting-up of adult education centres. They have the advantage of looking as much like a home as could be expected of any education centre. This, in itself, would be a considerable attraction to people who are deterred by the thought of attending educational institutions. In these centres discussion groups, lectures and continuous classes, music groups, and all the activities which took place in the army centres could be established. Here it is to be desired that the centres will copy the army centres and include not only subjects of practical importance to the community like politics, economics and government but also the subjects which are essential to individual development like music, art and painting. The adult education centre would also be more than a suitable home for an information room; the latter might be the means of persuading many people to visit the centre and some to stay. It goes without saying that the canteen and common-room should be the first rooms to be fitted in the centre. Where arrangements can be made for accommodating students in near-by houses or hostels, adult education centres might also be used, as they were in the Army, for short courses and conferences at

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week-ends and in holiday periods.

The cost of maintaining these centres would not be prohibitive. According to figures worked out by actual experience, the Educational Settlements Association suggests that for £1,000,000 it should be possible to maintain one thousand centres annually. This would allow for one centre per seventy thousand of the population in urban areas and one per ten thousand in rural areas. Their influence on the community would be immeasurable. Moreover, a suggestion by the Ministry of Education for establishing adult education centres is not so audacious and idealistic as it seems at first sight.

They hazard the opinion [we are told] that voluntary labour (given the materials) might produce community centres in double-quick time. . . . The South Wales miners built themselves such oases in the great depression — and the troops have done the same a hundred times in this war. There has never been the least difficulty in getting soldiers and A.T.S. to renovate, decorate and make habitable the decrepit buildings which have subsequently blossomed into Army Study Centres.²

The relationship of the centre to other further education institutions should be carefully thought out. While many people, who would not join classes at the technical college, would undoubtedly become active members of a small community, the impression that the adult education centres are concerned mainly with cultural activities whereas the technical institutes are primarily concerned with training for vocations should not be allowed to develop. This would create the unfortunate impression that training for a vocation is something divorced from culture, and would undoubtedly react to the detriment of the technical colleges. Here, probably, the solution will be found by making the adult education centre an 'out-lier' of the technical institution, the warden acting under the general direction of the principal of the college.

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RESIDENTIAL EDUCATION

The subject of education in small communities at non-residential adult education centres leads naturally on to residential education. The value of education where individuals not only study together but also breakfast, dine and play together has been advocated so genuinely and skilfully by Sir Richard Livingstone and others on various occasions that there is no need to repeat the advocacy here. It was Sir Richard who, in his book called *The Future in Education*, first directed nation-wide attention to the remarkable effects produced by the Folk High School movement in Scandinavia. In many cases, as he said, the lives of men and women had been completely transformed by a few months' residence at one of these Folk High Schools, and Sir Richard has been a consistent leader of a strong body of opinion which recommends that a similar movement should be adapted to the needs and conditions of Britain. It is generally recognised, too, that the value of living in residence and out at a university often means the difference between education and instruction. The advantages of boarding-school education to many children have also been accepted, and has led to a widespread movement for providing this type of education for as many children as would benefit from it.

Army education, too, has demonstrated the remarkable value of residential education and can claim quite fairly that, allowing for Service conditions, it has accomplished at least a little of what Sir Richard Livingstone has been recommending. Even before the Army Education Scheme for the release period was begun, some thousands of soldiers and auxiliaries had attended residential courses on subjects ranging from current affairs to cookery and from drama to dress-making (see p. 141). Some of these were week-end courses, many lasted a week and a considerable number fourteen days or more. Often they were arranged jointly by the regional

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committees at the universities and members of the Army Educational Corps. The tutors were largely drawn from the academic staffs of the universities, and many of them have paid tribute to the inspiration they derived from the exhilarating response of the students. Other courses were held at technical colleges and other centres provided either by the local education authorities or the voluntary organisations. At these it was difficult to provide residential accommodation, but in the courses arranged at the various army schools of education the students lived and worked together. It was well known at these schools that, after two or three days, the educational temperature rose sufficiently to make soldiers and auxiliaries respond warmly to their work despite the chill of winter in uncongenial Nissen huts. Then, as the worthiest development in the Army Education Scheme, there were the formation colleges (see p 367). The Army has offered a lead to the civilian community in evolving the British response to the Scandinavian Folk High Schools.³

It is little use pretending, however, that, for some years at least, it will be possible to develop residential education for civilians on the same scale that was arranged for soldiers and auxiliaries. The production drives of the next few years will be such that it is unlikely that many industrial organisations will be prepared to spare their employees to attend courses on cultural subjects in the firm's time. But there are encouraging portents, and, within a few months of the end of war, one or two of the larger businesses in Britain had announced that they had accepted the principle that the education of their employees at residential centres would be to the immediate and ultimate advantage of the firm and they were buying country houses which could be fitted up as their own residential adult education centres. The kind of education they would provide would be of a non-vocational character, and, so far as possible, they would organise classes in subjects which were most in demand.

The directors of these firms are long-sighted people, and,

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in developing facilities for education for their employees in the firm's time, are expressing their belief that this so-called period of 'time off' will not only help to make their employees better individuals and better citizens but will, in time, bring dividends to their firms. Their experiences will be eagerly watched by other employers and, in the coming years, one may expect that the idea of providing time off for educational activities such as discussion groups and non-vocational classes in working time will spread to other firms, to the advantage of employer and employed. And as mechanisation of industry speeds up and factory work becomes more and more routine and monotonous, the privilege of being allowed time off for educational activities may become an inalienable right of industrial operatives.

At first we may hope to see employees granted leave from their work to attend short courses at residential centres, but in future the time allotted should be increased until sabbatical periods for study may reasonably be expected to last six or even twelve months. The value of such courses to individual employers, the employees and the industrial community at large has been well argued by Sir Richard Livingstone, the Workers' Educational Association and the Educational Settlements Association and need not be repeated.

The problem of releasing employees from their duties in the firm's time has been considered by Mr H. C. Dent. In his book, *A New Order in English Education*, he points out that the creation of a system of adult education would of necessity involve a major reform in the fabric of our industrial life. Then, he says,

assuming that every worker had the right to a fortnight a year at a short-term college and a course at a long-term college once every five years — and these would surely be minimum requirements if the scheme were to have effective influence on the life of society . . . on the basis of a gainfully employed population of 12,000,000, there would be between a quarter and half a million employees absent from their employment and resident in college

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at any given time. This is a formidable but by no means insuperable problem. Compared with the pre-war problem of unemployment it appears relatively insignificant, and the dividends, in hard cash, which a policy of periodic release from employment would pay, would immeasurably outweigh the expense and trouble of any administrative complications it caused.⁴

When directors and managers of industry are persuaded that what Mr. Dent is saying is not educational theorising but a good business proposition, the organisation of residential educational facilities for industrial workers will proceed apace. The process will be speeded if employers who already believe in the value of such schemes can be persuaded to talk to their fellow employers about them. Educationists, too, can play their part in asking employers to permit research to be carried out in their organisations over a period long enough to permit reasonably accurate and informative findings. But the real drive for the provision of facilities for residential education for industrial workers will undoubtedly come from discharged soldiers and auxiliaries themselves. Many of these men and women had experience of education at a residential centre for the first time during their Service careers. To them it meant an open door to a new world. Wise employers should see that the door is not closed. Instead of a handful of adult education residential centres in Britain as compared with sixty Folk High Schools in Denmark alone, we should aim for at least two for every county, one for every county borough and as many provided by voluntary organisations as their finances will permit.

Already there are promising signs that a start has been made. At Pendley Manor a residential centre for adult education was established in November 1945, by a group of private individuals with the backing of bordering local education authorities. In Kent it is proposed to build two centres, in Wiltshire one or two, while similar undertakings are being planned in other areas both by local education authorities and by extra-mural departments of universities

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The voluntary organisations too, especially the Educational Settlements Association, are on the march, and we hope that from them we shall be hearing of new ventures in residential educational centres for adults.

One unusual development is a scheme for studying wild life which has been originated by the West Wales Field Society. Under this scheme men and women who are interested in bird life are being encouraged to spend their holidays at Skomer, an island off the coast of Wales, where they will be initiated into the fascinating hobby of bird-watching. This scheme deserves every encouragement, and should lead other organisations to be equally bold in developing experimental courses for adults.

Even if employers do not release their workers for given periods in order to attend adult education residential centres, the organisations that contemplate the establishment of such centres should look no further than the growth of the holidays-with-pay movement to know that the demand will be forthcoming.

Nor need the opening of residential centres for the education of British students be confined to the home country. The fact that many members of the Forces now have more than a nodding acquaintance with Europe, America, the Near and Far East, should encourage the various voluntary organisations which arranged international courses before the War to develop their work as much as possible with the sure knowledge that their potential number of students is twenty to thirty times greater than it was before the War. When the United Nations Organisation settles down in the United States of America, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in Paris, the opportunity of increasing understanding of international affairs should be developed by the organisation of courses similar to those which were arranged by the League of Nations Union in Geneva and other places before the Second World War began. If opportunities are seized

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quickly, the future for residential adult education is bright. The Educational Settlements Association has estimated that the total annual expenditure of a single college in occupation the whole year round would be in the neighbourhood of £6000-£8000⁵. A thousand colleges — that is, one for approximately twenty thousand of the adult population — could thus be provided at a total cost of well under £10,000,000 a year. Democracy cannot afford not to afford it.

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Chapter Twenty-Four

Other Army Education Activities

TRAINING OF INSTRUCTORS

ONE of the least publicised, but most important, developments in army education was the attention devoted to the training of instructors. This began soon after the Army Bureau of Current Affairs was introduced in September 1941, and steadily grew both numerically and qualitatively throughout the War and during the Army Education Scheme of the release period.

At first the courses were of a very concentrated nature and aimed at helping officers to act as chairmen and leaders of discussion groups. The courses were usually organised by district education officers, and the tutors were often drawn from lecturers on regional committee panels. Sometimes the courses would last only for a few days and the results achieved were necessarily limited. But even in that short time it was possible to give regimental officers some useful hints on methods of promoting and controlling discussion as well as a certain amount of practice in so doing.

Even before these courses had been introduced, particular attention had been devoted to the training of instructors at the Army School of Education, which was then at Wakefield. These courses, which were usually of 14-21 days' duration, had been organised for officers and men who were being transferred to the Army Educational Corps. Although much of the time was used by the staff to expound the principles of Army education to the newcomers, most of the course was devoted to exposition of the technique of instruction and to

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practice in the various methods which had been considered.

These courses were usually conducted on the same pattern. At first lectures would be given on the general principles of instruction and on the psychological approach to the adult. Further lectures would follow dealing with more specific points in the use of the lecture, lesson and the discussion methods — and on the integration of all three — while various periods dealt with the use of teaching aids, both visual and mechanical. Another one or two periods would be concerned with hints on methods of preparing material and the best ways of presenting it. While these preparatory lectures were being given, ample time was available for dealing with students' questions which needed further elaboration. In the meantime, students had been warned that they would be expected to take practice lectures, lessons or discussions, and had been preparing for them.

Then came the part of the course which, however limited, gave these concentrated training courses their real value. Each student in turn would stand in front of his colleagues and would either deliver a lecture, teach a lesson, or lead a discussion on some topic which he had usually chosen himself. His practice instruction usually lasted about half an hour. Then, for the rest of the period, he would be subjected to one of the most critical examinations to which any prospective teachers have been submitted. Encouraged by the tutor, his fellow students would carefully analyse the practice period for the matter it contained, the method the instructor adopted and the aids he used, as well as those points in his personal bearing which militated against good instruction and which could be eradicated. On these occasions criticism was usually keen and fundamentally honest. Many university-trained teachers learned more of their shortcomings — and graces — as teachers in one hour than they had been made aware of during the whole of their university careers. On most occasions students were given second opportunities for practice periods, and the improve-

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ments effected as a result of the first criticisms had to be seen to be believed.

While this kind of 'potted' training was necessarily limited in quality, it produced results that surprised those who had become certificated teachers through the normal civilian courses. Many of these new recruits to the Army Educational Corps had been trained for the teaching of children and were glad of help and advice on the teaching of adults from men who were experienced in that work. Many of the new recruits had had no training as teachers, and they were doubly grateful. At its lowest level for them these training courses at least mitigated the subsequent terrors of learning to teach by trial and error.

But the important thing about all these courses, whether held at an army school of education, at universities or at district centres, was that they provided a flow of instructors, who, if not competent by the standards of civilian adult education tutors, at least were sufficiently enthusiastic and open-minded to tackle what for many of them was something new and to learn by their mistakes. The Army's decision to train its own instructors had been forced upon it by the dearth of professionally trained tutors within its ranks and by the potential demand for classes which could be expected from a concourse of some four to five millions. The decision proved to be right.

Here there is no need to prolong the account of how new training courses for instructors were developed to meet new demands. These have already been described in general terms and it is enough to say that, in November 1945, besides the work being done by universities and voluntary organisations, four army schools of education were functioning as well as the instructor training wings at formation colleges. The one feature that was common at all these training courses was the insistence that each student should take at least one practice period and should submit to the honest and critical analysis of the rest of his or her group.

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In considering what use can be made of these 'potted' instructional courses under the national educational system, two points have to be remembered. Although one can reasonably expect a considerable increase in the more informal kinds of adult education, it is known that there is an acute shortage of persons competent to conduct these more elementary types of adult education. Secondly, to men and women who have been given some training in instructional method in the Forces, it seems surprising that local education authorities and voluntary bodies provide no training in method for their tutors, and assume that, if a tutor knows his subject, he is automatically considered competent to teach it.¹ To cope with the expected growth of adult education in the immediate future, local education authorities and voluntary organisations should set up schools similar to those developed by the Army at Wakefield, Harlech, Cuerden Hall and Eltham Palace.

EDUCATION IN HOSPITALS

Another notable feature of army education, while new in no way, was the work that was done in hospitals. Before 1939 a considerable amount of activity had been taking place to help the patients to make a quicker return to health. But, as we have already indicated (p. 128), this was mainly devoted to occupational therapy and was usually concerned with providing exercises of a graduated nature to restore the lost use of muscles and limbs. With bed patients a certain amount of craft work had been encouraged while most civilian hospitals also possessed small libraries for patients who were fond of reading.

After the First World War education officers had been appointed to hospitals, but their attempts to develop educational programmes did not get very far because of the speedy and unco-ordinated system of demobilisation which was

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adopted. When the educational scheme was re-introduced in the Second World War, the importance of providing facilities in hospitals was at once accepted and, as we have seen (p. 275), some remarkably fine work was accomplished. In military hospitals education did much not only to counter-act boredom, restlessness and depression but also in building a bridge for the patient's return to normal life. The recognition that in the mind lay 'the will to health' meant that by developing educational activities the military authorities were providing patients with a voluntary impetus to recovery. Further, education in military hospitals was never looked upon as an isolated activity but part of the plan by which cure and rehabilitation could be effected. The medical officer, physio-therapist, occupational therapist, physical training instructor and the member of the Army Educational Corps all worked as members of a team with one goal in mind — the recovery of the patients.

The work varied in different types of hospitals while each patient had to be studied and treated as an individual. Different activities were encouraged for bed patients and up patients, for short-term cases and the long-term cases. And where the Army Educational Corps instructor had the right kind of attitude for this specialised type of work, the range of activities which went on in a single hospital was extensive. Arts and crafts, music and drama, reading and literary competitions, wireless listening groups — all flourished under the watchful eye of an enthusiastic instructor.

Here there need be little difficulty in carrying over this work to civilian hospitals. In 1943, the then Minister of Health (Mr. H. U. Willink) issued a circular encouraging hospital authorities to study educational developments in army hospitals and to encourage them to promote similar activities in their own hospitals. Many army patients, too, were sent to military wings of civilian hospitals and the educational activities which went on in these wings were observed by doctors, matrons, sisters and nurses and were

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oon developed for civilian patients. A large number of Army Educational Corps instructors have had experience in this kind of work and, on demobilisation, many of them would be glad to join civilian hospital staffs as educational organisers. If hospital authorities possess the will — and finance — to encourage educational activities similar to those which took place in military hospitals during the Second World War, they will have done a great deal to improve the quality of the country's hospital services. Here it must be emphasised that any educational developments in hospitals must fit in with medical ideals and medical practice. Today, for example, there is a growing conviction among medical men that too lengthy a period of 'lying-in' at the hospitals leads to a condition of 'hospitalisation' which is inimical to the recovery of patients. If this conviction spreads we may see radical changes in hospital treatment, and patients may be returned to their homes after operations and illnesses so quickly that there will be little time for developing any educational work. Whether this kind of treatment becomes common or not, the authority of medical officers in hospitals must remain paramount. It is they who should seek to encourage activities for the mind and body as part of the normal process of healing.

PRISONS AND DETENTION BARRACKS

Other residential centres where educational activities were carried on during and after the Second World War were the military prisons and detention barracks. Here, more than elsewhere, the programmes that could be arranged had to fit in to the general conditions of detention. As a result it was impossible to develop those spontaneous activities which took place in units and hospitals, and yet, in spite of obvious limitations, some prisons and detention barracks developed a range of educational services which did great credit to the

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military and educational staffs. Since the prisons took soldiers who had committed serious offences against military law, and consequently provided an 'atmosphere' which was much more severe than that in the detention barracks to which soldiers who had committed relatively minor offences were sent, the kind of educational work which could be attempted in the prisons was much more restricted than in the detention barracks.

Each prison and detention barracks had a reasonable complement of educational instructors and a certain number of hours were allotted for educational activities each week (Soldiers under sentence in military prisons and detention barracks differed from convicts in civil prisons in that they were given military training throughout their period of detention.) A.B.C.A. and British Way and Purpose discussions were constant features of the programmes while classes in various subjects including handicrafts (with the instructor's eye never far from the tools) were also held. Books had been allowed in military prisons and detention barracks for some years, but they usually consisted of old-fashioned books that were out of date and were not kept in an inviting condition. During the War, through 'welfare' and 'education' channels, good libraries of up-to-date books were built up, a service which was greatly appreciated by the majority of soldiers under sentence. The "News" and other programmes were broadcast in most of the detention barracks, while, in some, certain times each day were set aside for visits to the information room which was usually particularly attractive for soldiers under sentence because it contained the daily newspapers. Then, of course, there were the special courses in basic education which were conducted for the large number of illiterates who found their way into these prisons and detention barracks.

This, in brief, is an account of the kind of educational work that was developed in military prisons and detention barracks during the Second World War. We do not wish to

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suggest that it contains anything which was new or which was not going on in civilian prisons before 1939. In prisons like Wakefield, for example, and others where the treatment of crime was recognised as one of human and social reclamation and reconstruction, the educational programme was undoubtedly far more enlightened than anything that went on in military prisons. What the educational work in military prisons and detention barracks had shown was incontrovertible proof that what was being done in Wakefield was right and on sound lines. It offered an example which needed to be copied in all civilian prisons throughout Britain.

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Chapter Twenty-Five

Visual and Mechanical Aids

So the story whereby good features in army education might be carried over into civilian life could be continued ; here it need not be considered in great detail. It is hoped, for example, that with the provision of ' secondary education for all ' and the establishment of county colleges, whereby all young people attend classes in general and vocational education for one day a week until they are eighteen years of age, will mean that there should be no need to provide basic education for those unfortunate individuals who have hitherto reached maturity without the ability to read and write (see p. 225).

AIDS

Another significant feature in army education which needs close attention by all who are concerned with further education in civilian life was the use that was made of teaching aids. This was not confined merely to educational classes in the Army, and, indeed, greater use was made of some visual and mechanical aids in military training than in educational work. Films, for example, which have long been accepted by educationists as an admirable supplement to good teaching and have, nevertheless, been used so sparingly and contemptibly, were used by the military authorities as indispensable parts of military training. In both military and educational work, the value of any aid which would help the instructor to get his material across was encouraged on every possible occasion. Charts, diagrams, pictorial statistics, maps

Visual and Mechanical Aids

and other visual aids became recognised tools of the instructor's kit. The instructor showed his belief in these visual aids not only by believing in them but also by making and using them, a lesson which might well be copied by many of his civilian confrères.

Mechanical aids, too, like the gramophone, epidiascope, film strip and cinematograph projectors, as well as the radio (see p. 354), were often, after initial conservatisms had been overcome, taken up with enthusiasm and made into integral features of class teaching. Many of these army teachers will not be content without these mechanical aids when they return to civilian life, and local authorities, voluntary organisations and the universities should do all in their power to provide and encourage the use of these modern devices which have been developed by science and technology. No adult education tutor in the future, for example, should plan his work without making some use of the new programme of cultural broadcasts which the British Broadcasting Corporation has introduced.

BOOKS

Another feature in army education which might be further developed in civilian life is the use of books. During the War many more people developed an interest in reading. This was equally true of civilians as of members of the Forces, but it is probable that more new readers would have been found in the Services than in the civilian world. This was possibly due to the fact that, through the Welfare and Education branches, books were placed where they were easily accessible. When the unit libraries were made available during the release period, for example (p. 330), there was ample evidence that many men and women borrowed (and read) fictional and non-fictional books of good quality simply because they were readily accessible in rooms which the

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soldiers and auxiliaries were already in the habit of visiting. Further evidence could be adduced to suggest that, despite the fine work of borough and county libraries, there is a vast circle of men and women who would make use of a book service provided that the books were found in places which they habitually frequented and not in places which, however attractively laid out, still possess unfortunate institutional connections. Thus, if small collections of books could be kept in pit-head canteens, in the welfare rooms of industries and in other places of a similar nature — as many are — there are indications that, in time, a new reading public might be sufficiently stimulated to make use of already existing public library facilities. The establishment of these 'outliers' to the public libraries is a task which should present no considerable difficulties and needs only to be tackled with zeal and urgency to become a useful way of creating a greater reading public.

COMPREHENSIVENESS

There now remains what was undoubtedly the most significant feature of army education. That was its comprehensiveness. When the Army faced any new educational problem it immediately sought all the assistance which could be given and transformed that assistance into co-operative enterprise. It mattered not whether the assistance came from respectable adult education sources or from organisations which were struggling for existence. Provided they could do what was asked of them, the Army was prepared to use any co-operative individual or organisation and weave them into a comprehensive administrative scheme. Here lay the great strength of army education and here was the secret of any success it may have achieved. If the adult education system of Britain is prepared to accept this same principle that dominated army education throughout and after the

Visual and Mechanical Aids

Second World War, there is no reason why an educational torch should not be lit which would reflect in the eyes of all free men in Britain.

The message of army education to those who will be engaged in the important work of adult education has been well put by one who, on his own confession, had been brought up in the academic, professional, adult educational world of 1939 (and, incidentally, was still convinced of the value of the higher study group method).

I have learnt [wrote Mr Harry Ross] that unless the many, many bodies interested pull together, you do not really get things done. A bit of an overlap, good, yes, competition, no. And I have learnt that the form of education for which one has the greatest contempt is frequently the most useful to use as a stepping stone to something else.

Those who have been associated with Army education know you just had to try everything once, and it was quite surprising what could happen. The most impressive lesson I learnt was the unexplored, unexploited potential of interest, and the very shrewd judgement that is to be found in the men and women who never had been in an adult education class of any type.

I am quite humble in the sense that I know that in my previous work I had never got at the people that I wanted to get at. The Army has just touched the fringe of the problem. It has got people thinking.¹

Providing that facilities are made quickly available by local authorities, the universities and voluntary organisations, provided that there is firm direction from the central authority, civilian adult education could become, as army education attempted to do, as wide as society, as varied as life and the reflection of democracy to which it is indivisibly joined.

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